

HCC Services for Young People – Stevenage Spring Term Report 2026

Hertfordshire Services for Young People supports young people to achieve their potential by delivering high-quality youth work, careers education, information, advice and guidance, as well as work-related learning and work experience opportunities. We review and maintain Education, Health and Care Plans for young people aged 16 and over, ensuring they receive the support they need post year 11.

Committed to giving young people high quality opportunities to learn life skills and excel in their personal and social development, SfYP aims to address issues at the earliest opportunity to give young people the best chance to succeed, have a place in their community, to reach their potential and make a successful transition to adulthood.

The Service delivers targeted prevention and early intervention work to ensure that young people get the help they need early and to reduce the necessity for higher cost specialist intervention.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Celebrates 70 Years

As the Licensed Organisation for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) in Hertfordshire, SfYP joined celebrations marking the Award's 70th anniversary at Buckingham Palace. SfYP staff were invited to attend in recognition of the vital role DofE leaders, coordinators and volunteers play in supporting young people to achieve their awards and develop confidence, independence and essential life skills.

Hertfordshire County Council has supported the delivery of the DofE for more than 50 years and currently enables 97 schools and community organisations to deliver the programme under the SfYP licence. There are currently 15,728 young people participating in the DofE across Hertfordshire, with 5,527 awards achieved during the last year. The anniversary event celebrated the achievements of young people and recognised the dedication of the staff and volunteers who support them to succeed.



Pictured: From left to right: Alyson Lord (DofE Coordinator at Dame Alice Owen School), Cllr Mark Watkin, Sally Smith (SfYP Employment and Training Adviser), Russell Dyke (DofE Volunteer), Rachael Garcia (SfYP Senior Youth Worker), Phil Munn (SfYP Youth Worker), Peter Ambler (SfYP DofE Manager), Cllr Hilary Skoczylas, Andy Riley (DofE Coordinator at Monks Walk School), Linton Sutherland (SfYP Senior Youth Worker).

UK Youth Parliament (UKYP)

Following the completion of the Hertfordshire UKYP election process and all necessary confirmations, all seven Hertfordshire Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) and seven Deputy Members of Youth Parliament have formally accepted their positions and are now confirmed in post.

UKYP is a national youth voice programme that enables young people to have their views heard on issues that matter to them locally, regionally, and nationally. As a UKYP region, Hertfordshire is allocated seven elected MYP positions, ensuring that young people from across the county are represented at both county and national levels. This year, Hertfordshire has also appointed seven Deputy Members of Youth Parliament, further strengthening and amplifying the voice of young

people across the county by increasing opportunities for participation, representation, and leadership.

The new cohort represents young people from communities across Hertfordshire and will serve until March 2027 under the current UKYP arrangements. Throughout their term, they will work collaboratively to represent the views, experiences, and priorities of young people across Hertfordshire, while contributing to local, regional, and national youth voice initiatives.

Over the coming months, the MYPs and Deputy MYPs will participate in a structured programme of induction, training, and development activities. This will include regular meetings, engagement with local youth councils and forums, campaign development work, consultations with decision-makers, and opportunities to influence policy and decision-making on issues affecting young people. Together, they will play a key role in ensuring that the voices of Hertfordshire's young people are heard and acted upon at every level.

Hertfordshire Youth Council

From September, SfYP will launch the Hertfordshire Youth Council (HYC), creating a county-wide platform for young people to have a stronger voice in the decisions, services and priorities that affect their lives. Building on the success of local and district youth councils and SEND youth councils, the HYC will strengthen the link between local youth voice activity and county-level decision-making, ensuring young people's views help shape policy, services and strategic priorities across Hertfordshire.

HYC will bring together representatives from each SfYP local / district Youth Councils and SEND Youth Councils, ensuring inclusive representation of young people aged 11–17 and up to 25 for those with SEND. Hertfordshire's elected Members of the UK Youth Parliament (MYPs) will also be part of the council, helping to connect local, county, and national youth participation initiatives.

A key role of the HYC will be to provide meaningful opportunities for young people to engage directly with elected members, senior leaders, and partner organisations. Through a structured forum, young people will be able to raise issues that matter to them, contribute to service development and co-production, support campaigns on key priorities identified through consultation, and participate in strategic discussions and decision-making processes.

By bringing together young people from across the county, the HYC will provide a clear and consistent route for youth voice to influence decision-making, strengthen civic participation, and help ensure the needs, aspirations and experiences of Hertfordshire's young people are reflected in the future direction of services and communities.

Stevenage SEND Youth Council

Young people participating in Services for Young People (SfYP) SEND Youth Councils have actively engaged in consultation activities, co-produced local campaigns, and contributed to the development of strategic plans, service improvements, and community initiatives. Strong examples of co-production have included contributions to the SEND Provision Plan, The Big Plan, Hertfordshire County Council consultations, awareness-raising campaigns, and direct engagement with senior leaders, service managers, and local decision-makers. Through these opportunities, young people have influenced discussions, shared their lived experiences, and helped shape services and priorities that affect children and young people with SEND across Hertfordshire.

Young councillors of the Stevenage SEND Youth Council chose to focus on young people's mental health and wellbeing this term. Through mindfulness activities, calming music and group discussions, members explored the importance of coping strategies, healthy lifestyles and self-care. Activities included creating a paper chain of positive affirmations, designing mental health

posters for display around the centre, taking part in a mental health-themed Kahoot quiz and preparing healthy snacks such as fruit kebabs. Sports activities also encouraged discussions around the links between physical and emotional wellbeing.

Stevenage Youth Council

The Stevenage Youth Council focused on two awareness campaigns this term, developing posters on mental health and knife crime to help educate and inform other young people. Research formed an important part of both projects, with members gathering information and working together to decide on key messages and content. The group also welcomed a visit from the Police, preparing questions in advance and using the opportunity to discuss issues affecting young people in their local community.

The campaigns provided opportunities for young people to strengthen their teamwork, communication and research skills, while increasing their confidence when speaking with professionals and presenting their views. Participation in the UK Youth Parliament elections also gave members first-hand experience of the democratic process, with two young people standing as candidates and one successfully elected as a Member of Youth Parliament. Through these activities, the Youth Council continued to provide meaningful opportunities for young people to have their voices heard and influence issues that matter to them.

Young person: "This term, I have really been able to develop my teamworking skills when creating our raising awareness posters in groups"

Positive Pathways Oval Thursday Project

Our Positive Pathways Oval Thursday Project supports young people who may be vulnerable to anti-social behaviour by providing access to information, guidance and opportunities that help address barriers to progress and improve future life chances. Through the Positive Pathways curriculum, sessions explored topics including exploitation, substance misuse, emotional wellbeing, relationships and personal responsibility, encouraging young people to reflect on the choices they make and the impact those choices can have.

Building trusted relationships remained central to the project, with Youth Workers taking time to understand the challenges, concerns and circumstances affecting young people and, where appropriate, their wider support networks. Discussions increased awareness of the risks associated with exploitation, drugs, alcohol and unhealthy relationships, while helping young people develop a better understanding of consequences, responsibilities and where to access support when needed.

Positive Pathways Oval Friday Project

The Positive Pathways Oval Friday Project gave young people an active role in shaping the activities, resources and facilities available to them, helping to ensure sessions reflected their interests and needs. Creative work included producing promotional reels to showcase the project and encourage other local young people to get involved. Alongside this, the Positive Pathways curriculum explored bullying, exploitation and personal safety, creating opportunities for discussion around issues affecting young people in their day-to-day lives.

A greater awareness of personal safety and the impact of negative peer pressure emerged through group discussions and activities. Young people considered how to respond to challenging situations, explored ways to seek support and reflected on the importance of addressing concerns rather than ignoring them. Engagement with the project also encouraged participation in positive opportunities within the community, helping young people make informed choices and build confidence in managing situations that may affect their wellbeing.

Young person: "Making the reels for the social media promotion was fun"

Positive Pathways Bedwell Friday

Our Bedwell Friday Night Project supports young people who may be experiencing challenges that place them at risk of anti-social behaviour, providing access to information, guidance and opportunities that encourage positive decision-making and future aspirations. Through the Positive Pathways curriculum, sessions explored issues including exploitation, substance misuse, emotional wellbeing, relationships and personal responsibility, helping young people consider the impact of their choices and identify safer alternatives.

Trusted relationships remained central to the project, with Youth Workers working closely with young people to understand their circumstances, concerns and the factors influencing their behaviour. Discussions increased awareness of the risks associated with drugs, alcohol, exploitation and unhealthy relationships, while promoting a better understanding of consequences, responsibilities and where to access support. The project also provided a safe and supportive space where young people could discuss challenges, seek advice and engage positively with their peers and community.

Young people: This is a really fun project and I'm glad I get to come each week and make new friends"

"The staffing team are really supportive. I've managed to have some good talks with them and get some really good life advice"

Identity LGBT+ Project

Our Identity LGBT+ Project created opportunities for LGBT+ young people to explore themes including identity, belonging and shared experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Sessions covered topics such as reporting hate crime, gender identity and the experiences of coming out, with older members of the group sharing advice and reflections from their own journeys. A number of new young people joined the project during the term, with team-building activities and games helping participants get to know one another and feel comfortable contributing to discussions.

Pride Month provided an opportunity to learn about key moments in LGBT+ history, including the Stonewall riots and the legalisation of same-sex marriage, while encouraging participation in local Pride events across Hertfordshire. Through these discussions and activities, young people increased their understanding of how to report hate crime, gained knowledge of LGBT+ history and developed a stronger sense of belonging. The project continues to provide a welcoming space where young people feel understood, supported and able to express themselves openly.



Young people: "I have felt more able to be myself and grow relationships with people that are like myself whilst also gaining support from the adults about common LGBT problems, gaining education and improving my mental health and I realise I'm not alone"

"I met people who were like me and who understood me while I was still trying to figure out my sexuality. Before joining the group, I often felt like I didn't fit in anywhere"

MegaMix 13-17 SEND Project

The term's MegaMix SEND Project explored a range of independent living skills tailored to the needs of the group. Topics including money management, personal hygiene and home safety were delivered through interactive activities, quizzes and group discussions, helping young people develop practical knowledge for everyday life. Sessions were adapted to encourage participation and ensure learning remained accessible, engaging and relevant to the experiences of those attending.

Alongside curriculum activities, a strong emphasis was placed on teamwork and communication through group challenges and team-building games. Activities such as team battleships, protect the egg and creative problem-solving tasks encouraged young people to work collaboratively, support one another and develop positive relationships. As confidence within the group grew, several young people took on informal leadership roles, helping their peers participate in activities and contributing to a supportive and inclusive environment.

Young people: "I enjoy coming to MegaMix because I get to be part of a group, a group that makes me feel like myself"

"I've learnt how to work together and communicate as a team"

Parents of young person: "we would like to say thank you very much for the exceptional job you and your team are doing. You guys have given our children a sense of belonging and a forum to develop friendship and independence. We are truly blessed with you and your team. I am quite happy to provide a raving review for you to the council so let me know if you need me to...I appreciate everything you have done and once again thank you immensely for your patience and support"

Stevenage Street-Based Youth Work

Street-based youth work Street-based youth work in the areas surrounding Thomas Alleyne Academy and Hampson Park in Stevenage provided regular opportunities to engage with young people in their own community setting. Through informal conversations, group activities and games, Youth Workers explored topics from the Positive Pathways curriculum, including personal safety, emotional wellbeing, exploitation, substance misuse and the consequences of decision-making. This approach enabled young people to access information, advice and guidance in familiar environments while encouraging them to reflect on risk-taking behaviours, personal responsibility and safer choices.

Mental health and wellbeing also formed an important part of engagement this term. Activities included mindfulness exercises, calming music and group discussions focused on coping strategies, self-care and healthy lifestyles. Young people took part in creating positive affirmations, designing mental health awareness materials, preparing healthy snacks and exploring the links between physical and emotional wellbeing through sport and discussion. These activities helped foster a supportive group culture, with young people encouraging one another, building friendships and becoming more confident in discussing their wellbeing. Regular engagement strengthened self-esteem, increased awareness of positive coping strategies and encouraged young people to seek support when needed.

Young people: "Having this session straight after school has given me something fun to do, rather than hanging around in town doing nothing"

"We want to see change up here that matters to all of us"

SfYP Youth Zone Saturday Projects Funded by the Million Hours Fund

The SfYP Stevenage Youth Zone Saturday Project encouraged young people to take part in activities beyond their comfort zones while exploring topics such as friendship, personal boundaries, community responsibility and overcoming challenges. Discussions and group activities provided opportunities for young people to reflect on their relationships with others, consider the impact of their actions and develop skills that support positive participation within their communities. This term, young people chose to focus their social action work on a series of litter-picking events, taking responsibility for planning activities and liaising with Stevenage Borough Council to organise equipment and support.

Taking ownership of the social action project helped young people strengthen their written and verbal communication skills while working together towards a shared goal. Discussions around friendships and boundaries increased understanding of how to build and maintain positive relationships, while the litter-picking activities gave participants a visible sense of achievement as

they saw the immediate impact of their efforts on the local environment. The project provided meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to their community while developing confidence, responsibility and teamwork.

Young people: “I enjoyed doing the litter picking and doing something for community”
“We love coming here as it gets us out of the house and meeting new people, which is good for us”

The Youth Zone Project in Stevenage is delivered from Stevenage Young People's Centre. You'll find more information about the projects and the Million Hours Fund on our SfYP website.



Children Missing from Education (CME)

SfYP have been providing bespoke, targeted support to CME young people in Year 7 to 11, to ensure that alongside the support in place to access a school place, they have support to overcome barriers to successfully reintegrate and sustain that education place.

Of the 154 young people in Year 7 to 11 and in our area engaged in the programme so far in this academic year 103 have successfully re-engaged in education following SfYP support and 51 continue to be supported

Raising Aspirations Project for Home Educated Young People

The Raising Aspirations Project supported electively home educated young people to develop resilience, confidence and practical life skills. Activities focused on budgeting, shopping and planning meals, with participants working together to cost ingredients, prepare meals and develop a better understanding of managing money. Sessions also explored self-esteem, leadership, teamwork and stereotypes, encouraging young people to reflect on how they see themselves and others while building confidence in sharing their views and experiences.

Cooking activities proved particularly popular, providing opportunities for young people to strengthen their independence while working collaboratively towards a shared goal. Increased confidence was evident across the group, with several young people becoming more willing to participate in discussions and group activities. The project also supported the development of positive friendships and stronger peer relationships, helping to create a welcoming environment where young people felt comfortable engaging with others and trying new experiences.

Education, Employment and Training

Pathways to Success is being delivered to vulnerable groups in Stevenage including Care Leavers, previously CME young people and young people with SEND. This programme aims to reduce barriers to sustained employment, providing a holistic approach for those that are furthest from the labour market. The delivery includes Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance from a Nationally Qualified Adviser, the development of Employability Skills including CV development, job search skills and interview preparation, access to 11-5pm offer at Young People's Centres across the County, enhanced profiling (effective use of Linked In and social media platforms), experiences of work, and groupwork as required.

Our Employment Pathways Project for young people aged 16-25, is continuing in Stevenage for a third year. The young people who are part of this project will be supported to take part in bespoke support to access education, employment or training, including undertaking up to 70 hours of work experience.

Explore More Plus

Explore More Plus continues to be available to young people who are looked after (CLA), who have a child in need plan (CIN) or who have a child protection (CP) plan, in Hertfordshire Secondary Schools. The programme has been designed to focus on raising aspirations, building

confidence and encouraging the young person to think and plan for their future career paths, in order to reduce the risk of them becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) at post-16. Over the summer term 6 CLA young people from years 10 & 11 have taken part in meaningful work experience placements relating to their future aspirations, e.g. – one young person who would like to work in the Travel Industry in the future, spent a week with Richard Taylor Travel in Stevenage.

NEET and Not Known 16–18-year-olds in Stevenage – 30th June 2026

Advisers continue to track and support this cohort to ensure they enter and sustain positive EET outcomes. From the total cohort of 2273 Year 12 and 13s, 11 young people are not known, we will continue work to reach those individuals through phone calls and outreach. 67 young people are NEET, and we are actively working with these to help them into work, training, or education.

Get Work Ready

Employment and Training Advisers will be running a series of group sessions through out July – August, focused on preparing NEET young people (aged 16 -19, up to 25 with EHCP or care leaver) to go into work. [The workshops](#) will focus on the following themes:

- Session 1 – Getting to know yourself – your strengths and interests, what motivates you
- Session 2 – Wellbeing/resilience - dealing with barriers and challenges.
- Session 3 – Job matching and Job search
- Session 4 – CV Building and using AI
- Session 5 – Developing your interview skills
- Session 6 – Support going forward

Get September Ready

Advisers will be running the annual Services for Young People '[Get September Ready](#)' sessions through July, which are open to all young people who are finishing Year 11 and have applied to college. They are designed to help young people feel more confident and prepared for their next steps after school and help them feel more prepared for their transition to college.

The informal sessions are particularly beneficial for young people who have been out of education, are home-educated, or have special educational needs and disabilities, including those with social, emotional and mental health needs.

STEM Access 2 All (A2A) Project

The STEM Access to All (A2A) project has engaged dozens of students from across Stevenage schools with information guidance and experiences related to careers in STEM industries. Working with groups of year 9 & 10 students from Barnwell, Nobel, Marriotts and Stevenage ESC, alongside a group of EHE students through our Raising aspirations group, the project has sought to give young people from underrepresented demographics, specifically girls and those from BAME backgrounds, the confidence and knowledge to consider and pursue a career in the STEM industries, a key element of the Stevenage economy.

Students have taken part in multiple interactive workshops delivered by SfYP, covering the different careers and pathways across STEM. They have attended employer led workshops from employers such as JCA engineering, Airbus and Eppendorf. The project ended this month with a group visit to Airbus which the students enjoyed. All students involved in the project have reported greater knowledge in STEM careers and pathways.

Young People with SEND

The [My Futures programme](#) aims to sustain young people with an EHCP in education by providing a support network to help them to remain in education. SfYP working with local colleges identify young people who require additional support as they start their college course or who are at risk of disengaging from their college course during the year or are at risk of becoming NEET when their college course completes. SfYP Advisers, Youth Workers and EHCP Coordinators work with colleges to provide ongoing support.

EHCP Reviews Team

The EHCP Reviews Team has continued to progress annual review activity, with a focus on issuing decisions following reviews completed during the academic year. Alongside this work, the team is supporting the Year 11 phase transfer process by identifying suitable post-16 destinations and coordinating consultations with further education providers. This work is being delivered in close partnership with SfYP Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Advisers to ensure young people and their families are supported to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Supporting successful transitions into further education remains a key priority. EHCP Coordinators work alongside SfYP CEIAG Advisers and Youth Workers to provide additional guidance for young people who are uncertain about their destination, at risk of becoming NEET, or looking to re-engage with education. The team is also working with local colleges and the Quality Assurance Team to improve the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans and increase the number amended within statutory timescales, ensuring plans remain outcomes-focused and effectively support young people to achieve their aspirations.

Careers Guidance, Preparing for Adulthood and Work Experience

SfYP CEIAG Advisers have been supporting young people across Stevenage with careers education, information, advice and guidance as part of our contracted offer with schools. This academic year we will have delivered a total of 244 CEIAG traded days in Stevenage schools; this has consisted of meeting with year 11, 10 and sixth form students to help them plan and prepare for their next steps. Each student receives a personalised action plan.

Our advisers also continue to meet with year 11s who are CME (missing from education), Electively home Educated and those working with ESMA, to provide careers guidance around suitable post 16 options.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Young people participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award worked together to prepare for the different elements of the programme, including volunteering, skills, physical activity and expedition planning. Sessions covered practical topics such as tent pitching, campcraft, equipment selection, food planning, map reading and route planning, while also supporting participants to set up and manage their eDofE accounts. Working as a group enabled young people to develop their understanding of the award requirements while taking increasing ownership of their individual progress.

The programme encouraged young people to organise their own activities, take responsibility for achieving their goals and engage independently with opportunities linked to their chosen sections. As their confidence grew, participants became more self-reliant in planning tasks and seeking support from others involved in their volunteering, skills and physical activities. Working towards shared goals also helped strengthen friendships and teamwork, creating a supportive environment in which young people could challenge themselves and celebrate their achievements together.

Stevenage Young People's Centre 11-5 Hub

Stevenage Young People's Centre is available for young people to access support between 11am and 5pm, Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. Advisers and Youth Workers are on hand to provide a warm welcome to young people who drop in or call the young people's centre. Young people access information, advice and support with issues such as mental health, sexual health (including free condoms and free chlamydia, gonorrhoea and pregnancy testing) relationships, personal safety, benefits and finances, housing and homelessness, drug and alcohol use and can get help with progressing into education, training or finding a job or apprenticeship. This term 347 young people have accessed the centre.

Partnerships

The Youth Strategy Partnership Group meets regularly with the aim to put support in place to meet the presenting needs of Stevenage young people, as established in the annual Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey (completed in partnership with Public Health). Working with the Youth Council and SEND Youth Council, the group have produced actions and aims to be worked towards across the year.

For further information about the work of the Team or the Service, please contact the Head of Service:

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