

# Wrexham Prevention and Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and Families

2023-2026

**'Early and Collaborative'**

**Professionals' Version**



**NHS**  
WALES  
**GIG**  
CYMRU | Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board



**HEDDLU**  
**GOGLEDD CYMRU**  
**NORTH WALES**  
**POLICE**



**AVOW**  
Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham  
Cymdeithas Mudiadau Gwirfoddol Wrecsam



**wrexham**  
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL  
**wrecsam**

This document is available in Welsh

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# Introduction

## What is Prevention and Early Help?

Noticing difficulties when they first start to show and offering the right kind of help so that children, young people and families are happy, healthy and safe and develop the resilience, confidence and independence needed to take control of their own lives.



## Why is Prevention and Early Help Important?

Because some families need help to be happy, healthy and to feel safe and for children to do well. And getting a little help as soon as possible when any difficulties start has been shown to be the best way to do this.



## Why do we need a Strategy?

So that everyone in Wrexham who works with children, young people and families are focussed on the same priorities.

Also so that children, young people and their families know what to expect.

And so that partners understand what kinds of provision make a difference to children, young people and families.

This is the strategy of the Wrexham Prevention and Early Help Partnership and it will help us to

- notice when children, young people and their families are having difficulties
- improve the support on offer to Wrexham families
- make sure people know what support is available and can get help quickly and easily
- see if things are improving
- add value to the excellent prevention and early help work already taking place

'We' in this strategy means this partnership, which will oversee the implementation of the strategy and its action plan, supported by a range of priority groups. The partnership will carry out an annual review of the progress made.

The organisations that belong to this partnership are listed at the end of the strategy.



The partnership recognises that there are some factors beyond its control that impact directly on families, therefore will focus on those areas where it can make an impact. We also recognise that social, economic and environmental factors influence health, wellbeing and inequalities.

This approach encourages us to ask some different questions and to work with others in order to expand the choices available to us. This will create more satisfying, long-term solutions to ongoing problems, arriving at a common purpose on which we can all cooperate to achieve real change.

This strategy is written for professionals who work with children, young people and families in Wrexham.



# Our Vision

Working together to provide the right help at the earliest opportunity, to make sure children, young people and their families are happy, healthy and do well.

So what helps children, young people and families to do well?

Welsh Government believe that children do best if they

- Have a great start in life
- Take part in and enjoy learning
- Enjoy healthy lifestyles
- Are safe and well cared for
- Can play and have fun
- Are listened to and treated with respect
- Live in a nice home and community
- Have enough money

People in Wrexham also think these things are important.

This strategy links to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which states that Prevention is a statutory function, and to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 which includes Prevention as one of its five ways of working.

# What we know about Wrexham

Wrexham is the largest city in North Wales, with a population of roughly 135,100 people, of which about 30,600 are aged 0-19 and about 37,600 are aged 0-24.

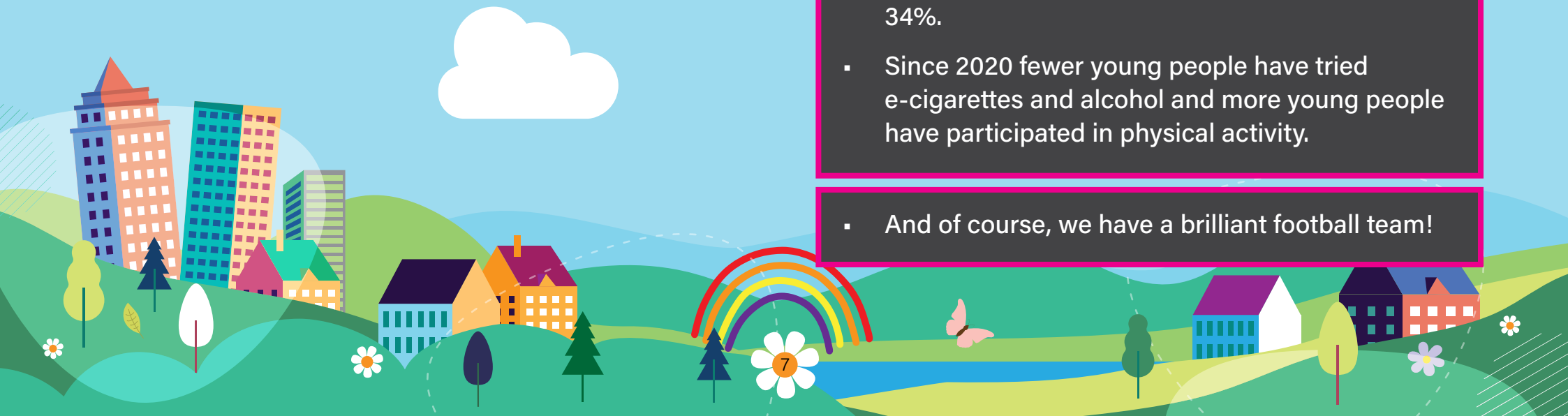
Wrexham is a great place to live and there are lots of positive things going on for children, young people and their families.

\* Note: The data for this section is included in Appendix 1

For example

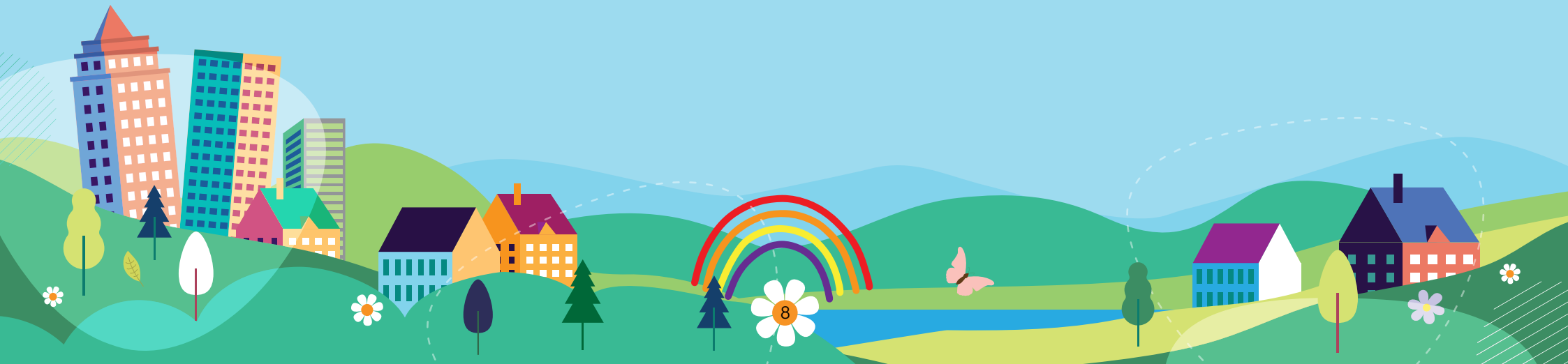
- Wrexham has lots of parks and countryside for people to enjoy: 37 protected green spaces like Erddig and Tŷ Mawr country parks.
- Wrexham has a wide range of excellent community provision delivered by a range of partners for children, young people and families.
- Like the rest of Wales, 95% of children receive all their routine immunisations by age 1.
- In 2020/21, Wrexham had the lowest rate of proven offences committed by children and the lowest number of cautions and court sentences given to children, in North Wales.
- 40% of adults participate in sport 3 or more times a week, in comparison to the Wales average of 34%.
- Since 2020 fewer young people have tried e-cigarettes and alcohol and more young people have participated in physical activity.

▪ And of course, we have a brilliant football team!



However, there are some things that remain a concern, such as:

- the number of children on the Child Protection Register.
- the number of children who need help from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- the number of families with children who are experiencing poverty.





# Our Priorities

After looking at the data and talking to families, young people and professionals, we have agreed to focus on the following 5 priorities for the next 3 years (2023 – 26).

1. All children, young people and their families enjoy good physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.
2. All babies, children and young people are able to communicate effectively.
3. All children, young people and their families enjoy positive healthy relationships.
4. All children, young people and their families have access to a good standard of living.
5. All children and young people engage well with education and reach their full potential.

'Priorities' are important things that we think we need to work better together to achieve.

\* Note: Some of these priorities overlap with each other.



## Priority 1 :

All children, young people and their families enjoy good physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

### What does this mean?

This means that children, young people and their families

- feel well and lead a healthy lifestyle
- are happy and feel positive about their lives
- enjoy good relationships in the family and with friends and neighbours
- cope well with difficulties when they do arise
- look after themselves and others

If people have poor physical, emotional and mental health, we tend to see

- people who find it difficult to participate fully in daily life due to illnesses or poor health
- people who have difficulties with attachment
- people who feel isolated and disconnected
- people who use drugs or alcohol, who self-harm or have eating disorders
- people who find it really hard to recover from difficulties and trauma
- people who find it hard to look after themselves and their children
- people who are sad, stressed, anxious, depressed or have a mental illness



## Why is this a priority?

Because we are seeing an increase in the number of

- parents and children asking for help with anxiety and relationship difficulties
- children and young people requesting help with mental health issues
- families who are looking for support because the parents/carers have poor mental health or have substance misuse issues

## What steps will we take?

We will

1. Improve our knowledge so that we notice problems at an earlier stage.
2. Develop a network of organisations which offer mental and emotional health support.
3. Make sure that we all know what services are available in Wrexham to help improve mental and emotional health.
4. Improve everyone's services by sharing information, training and good practice.
5. Collate all available data so we understand how significant the problem is and whether things are improving. Some will be statistics and some, feedback from families and professionals.



## Priority 2 :

All babies, children and young people are able to communicate effectively.

### What does this mean?

This means that babies, children and young people can

- understand and interact with others
- communicate how they feel
- communicate if there is a problem
- get on well with others

If babies, children, young people and parents have poor speech language and communication skills we tend to see

- children who cannot speak, who speak very little and who cannot make themselves understood
- parents with poor literacy
- children who find it hard to get on with others
- children who find it hard to learn
- children who are sad, anxious and frustrated



## Why is this a priority?

Because we are hearing more and more reports from childcare providers, schools and support organisations of children with speech and language difficulties but we don't have good data on this yet.

## What steps will we take?

We will

1. Introduce Speech, Language and Communication training for all professionals that work with children; awareness raising and 'talk support' strategies to help children to develop language skills.
2. Make sure 'talk support' for children is consistent and follows them throughout childcare, nursery and primary school.
3. Create new data sets so we understand how significant the problem is and whether things are improving. Some will be statistics and some, feedback from professionals and families.
4. Make it easier to find out what talk support is available to children, whatever their age.

'Talk support' means ways in which adults learn to notice if a child's speech is not developing as it should be and then can help children to develop their speech and communication.



## Priority 3 :

All children, young people and their families enjoy positive healthy relationships.

### What does this mean?

It means that children, young people and parents/ carers have healthy and supportive relationships, which involve trust, fairness, empathy, good communication, caring, honesty and respect with

- each other
- their wider family
- their friends
- their siblings

It also means that parents / carers have healthy and supportive relationships with

- each other
- friends, neighbours and
- wider family members

If children, young people and families do not have healthy positive relationships, then we tend to see

- people who have difficult or abusive relationships, including violence
- people who feel isolated and insecure
- people who feel anxious in the company of others
- people who find it hard to trust others and disengage with people who could offer to help them
- people who lack confidence and avoid social interaction



## Why is this a priority?

Because we are seeing an increase in

- the number of parents and children asking for help with anxiety and relationship difficulties
- demand for help for families and young people affected by domestic abuse
- professionals telling us that they are worried because children are having trouble with friendships

By 'domestic abuse' here, we mean all kinds: abusive behaviour and violence, controlling and coercive behaviour, financial and emotional abuse.

## What steps will we take?

We will

1. Understand better how social media and the pandemic have affected the way we view relationships.
2. Ensure that professionals use their skills and knowledge to help children, young people, parents and carers to develop and maintain healthy relationships.
3. Improve everyone's services by sharing information, training and good practice.
4. Make sure that we all know what services are available in Wrexham to help children and families to access good quality experiences together and improve relationships.



## Priority 4 :

All children, young people and their families have access to a good standard of living

### What does this mean?

This means that children young people and families

- do not live in poverty
- live in a comfortable home that is big enough for their needs
- are not disadvantaged by debt

2011 Child Poverty Strategy definition of poverty:  
"By poverty, we mean a long-term state of not having sufficient resources to afford food, reasonable living conditions or amenities or to participate in activities (such as access to attractive neighbourhoods and open spaces) which are taken for granted by others in their society."

If children, young people and families are living in poverty then we tend to see people

- who are cold, hungry, poorly clothed, have a poor diet or are unhealthy
- who have low aspirations or feel helpless about their future
- who feel unequal to others
- who feel isolated and lack transport





## Why is this a priority?

### Because

- there is an increasing number of children in Wrexham living in low income<sup>7</sup> families and the increasing cost of living is expected to make matters worse
- income and the rising cost of living are among the biggest worries for many families at the moment

'Low income' means that the family do not have enough money to afford a good basic standard of living.

## What steps will we take?

### We will

1. Keep updated about the way families are affected by the rise in the cost of living and will make sure that this information is considered when making decisions about how resources are deployed.
2. Make sure that people who work with young people and families know about all the schemes that can help them with the rise in the cost of living.
3. Ensure that information about free and low cost activities for children, young people and families is easily available.



## Priority 5 :

All children and young people engage well with education and reach their full potential.

### What does this mean?

This means that children and young people

- participate regularly in education and enjoy learning
- take a full part in all aspects of their learning journey including making friends
- achieve their expected grades
- go on to training, further education or employment

If children, young people and families are not engaged in education then we tend to see

- children getting into trouble at school and outside of school
- children not engaging with learning and not achieving their expected grades
- children excluded from schools
- young people leaving secondary education without plans for training, education or employment



## Why is this a priority?

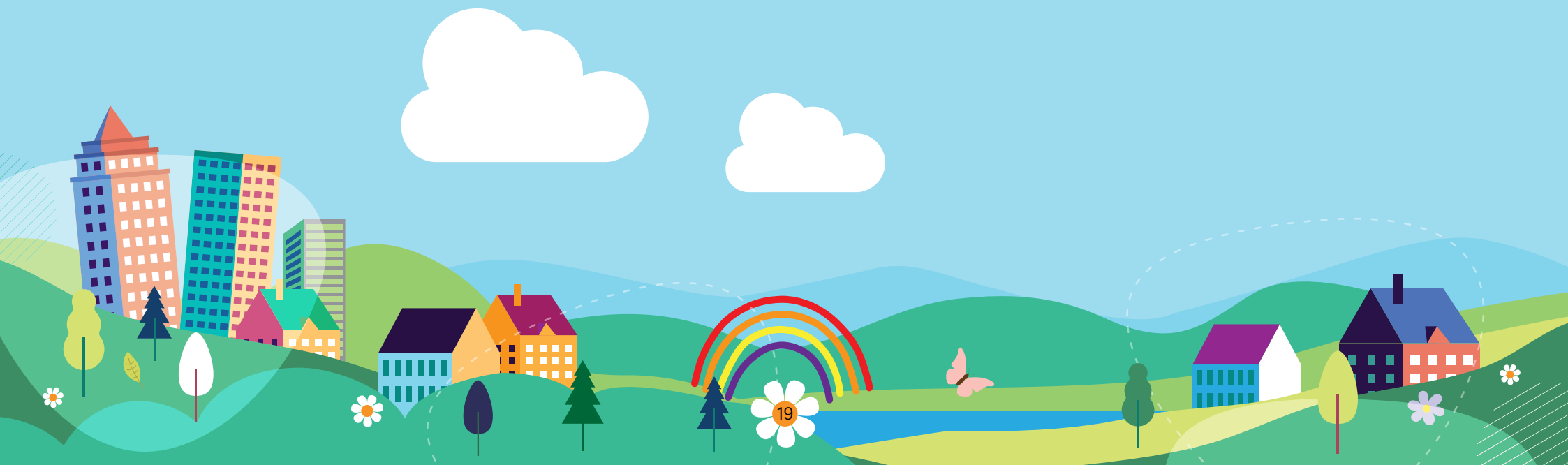
### Because

- we know that there are a number of challenges that affect how well children do in education in Wrexham, but education data collection in Wales was interrupted during the pandemic, so we do not have good recent data
- however historically, there have been concerns in Wrexham about Key stage 4 results, the level of exclusions from schools and about the gap in educational attainment between poorer children and their more affluent peers

## What steps will we take?

### We will

1. Work together to understand better what helps all children and young people succeed in education irrespective of their socio-economic background or additional learning needs.
2. Make sure all children can access out of school opportunities for learning.
3. Ensure early detection of difficulties and good co-ordination of support for children who need it, during their learning journey and at points of transition.



# How you can get involved!

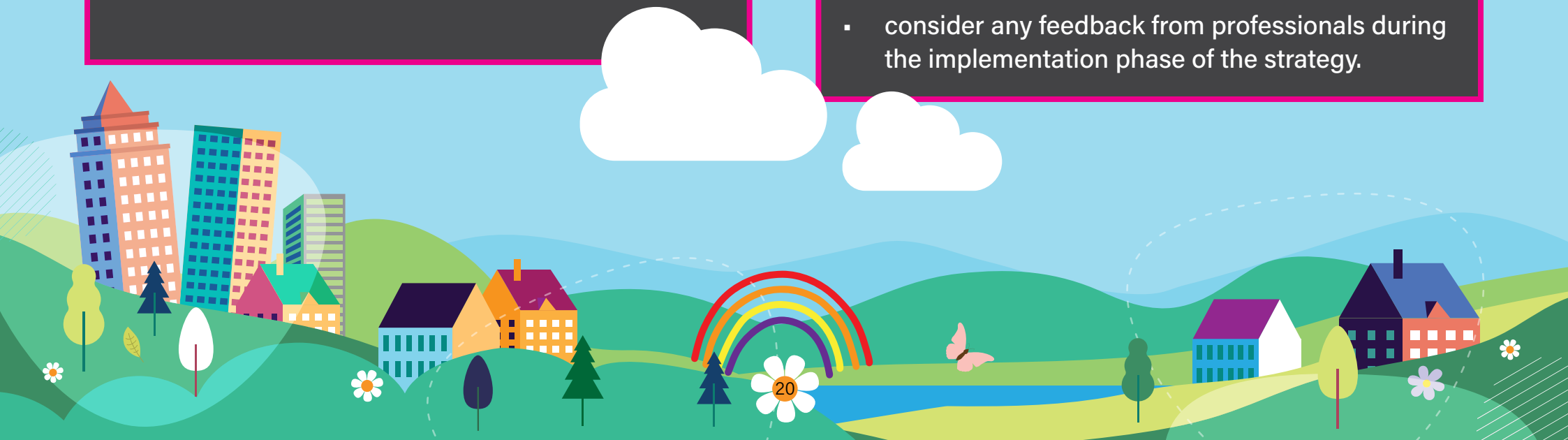
We are committed to ensuring that the voice of the child underpins all decision making and that there are ongoing opportunities for them to influence the direction of the work of the partnership.

## You can

- tell us what you think about this strategy to make sure we get it right. You can do this by talking to your representative on the PEH Partnership.
- tell us if things are improving in any of these priority areas or even if things are getting worse. And why!

## We will

- ensure the voices of children, young people and their families in Wrexham are heard when making decisions that affect their lives.
- ensure that the voices of children and young people in Wrexham feed into the work of the partnership.
- consider any feedback from professionals during the implementation phase of the strategy.



# The Partners

The Prevention and Early Help Partnership is made up of representatives from the following organisations:

- Association for Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham, Caia Park Partnership, Homestart, the Venture
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Health Visiting and School Nursing, Safeguarding
- Coleg Cambria and Glyndŵr University
- Department for Work and Pensions
- North Wales Police
- Public Health Wales
- Wrexham Local Authority: Children's Services, Education and Early Intervention and Housing departments



# Appendices

Wrexham County Borough has a population of 135,100 people (Census 2021), with Wrexham having the highest percentage of 0 to 19 year olds in North Wales.

We think that too many of our children are not experiencing the best start in life and not doing as well as they should be.

We use data to understand some of the challenges that our children, young people and their families face in Wrexham. However in some of the areas where we would like to have good data, it is not yet available so it needs to be established.

We have access to lots of data but these below are some of the cross cutting data which we have used to inform the strategy. These will help us in the long term to measure the impact of the strategy and where there are gaps in data, we aim to address these.

- The number of children with a social worker and who are in care has gone up a lot recently:
  - In 2020/21, per 10,000 of the population, Wrexham had the highest number of children on the child protection register in North Wales.
  - The 'Children Looked After' category has seen the biggest growth in numbers of children receiving care and support, increasing demand in finding the right placements where children and young people can thrive. There were 375 looked after children as of 31st March 2021, an increase of 50 and the highest increase of all the North Wales local authorities.



## Priority One

- We are seeing an increase in demand for children, young people and parents requesting help with mental health issues and anxiety.
- There has been an increase in the number of children and young people from Wrexham attending counselling from 705 in 2019/20 to 1038 in 2020/21.
- In 2020/21, children and young people from Wrexham mostly needed counselling to support with anxiety - previously 'family' was significantly higher as the main reported reason.
- The data about demand for parental mental health support is anecdotal at the moment so we need to address this.

## Priority Two

- More children are showing signs of speech and language delay
- We do not have good data on this yet – this needs to be established.



## Priority Three

- We are seeing an increase in demand for children, young people and parents requesting help with relationship difficulties.
  - We need to establish data on relationships and demand for relationship support.
- We are seeing an increase in demand for help for families affected by domestic abuse, parental mental health and substance misuse.
  - Data shows increasing numbers of high risk cases of domestic abuse in Wrexham being discussed by a MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) over the past five years. The number in 2022 being more than double that in 2018. Better data needs to be found to establish the impact of parental mental health and substance misuse on families.

## Priority Four

- There is an increasing number of children in Wrexham living in low income families, with the increasing cost of living expected to have a further impact.
  - A number of small local areas in Wrexham feature in the 10% most deprived in Wales.
  - Poverty and deprivation rates in Wales are increasing.
  - In 2020/21, 33.41% of children in Wrexham were living in poverty, this is the highest percentage since 2014/15, with an increasing trend from 2016/17.
  - We need better data on the number of children in families and the number of young people who are homeless and / or in temporary accommodation.





## Priority Five

- Children in Wrexham are facing challenges that are impacting on their educational outcomes.
- Historically children in Wrexham have scored lower in their Capped 9 score (a combination of exam scores) at Key Stage 4 than other areas in North Wales, with Wrexham the second lowest in 2019/20.
- In Wales, Wrexham has the highest average disadvantage gap in education for 2017-2019 (this means the difference in achievement between children in poorer and richer families).

- Children in Wrexham are more at risk of being excluded from school than children in most other parts of the UK.
- Historically exclusions and fixed term exclusions have been particularly high in Wrexham when compared to other Welsh Local Authorities (2019/20).

