

# **Bradford District Children and Young People’s Strategy 2023-2025**

For the happy, healthy development and success of our babies, children and young people. For them to grow-up in safe and supportive: families, homes, communities, education establishments, leisure and outdoor spaces.

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## Foreword

By Cllr Duffy and Cllr Khan (Co-chairs of the Children and Young People and Families Executive) (to be developed once the rest of the content of the Strategy agreed by Wellbeing Board)

*The Children and Young People's Strategy will be the overarching strategy for children and young people in the district.*

## Introduction

This strategy supports our collective district ambition to ensure all babies, children and young people have equity of access to the resources and support available to help them reach their full potential and our vision is for Bradford District to be a wonderful place for children to thrive, grow up, live and work.

It identifies the priorities for the Children and Young People and Families Executive (CYPF) and its partners to support babies, children and young people to be: happy and healthy, able to develop to their full potential, and have successful lives. The strategy covers people aged 0-25 years-old, and all public sector and voluntary and community organisations that support and work with: babies, children, and young people, and their families in our district.

Its overarching aim is to ensure, that no matter their background, family, personal or other circumstances, all babies, children and young people are able to develop to their full potential and have fair access to all the opportunities the district offers.

The ambitions and priorities have been developed through listening to the voice of children and young people; consultation with other stakeholders; data and other evidence; and harnessing the experience and expertise of key district partners, who will be delivering against its outcomes.

We will also ensure children and young people have opportunities to be involved in decision-making across the range of our district's strategic public sector partnerships, through the implementation of Child Friendly and building on what has gone before.

We will support children to be healthy and well, we will reduce inequalities in physical and mental health, social and emotional development and educational attainment and actively look to tackle discrimination, the normalisation of bullying and hate crime as these can have detrimental and adverse impacts on a child's long term opportunities and health.

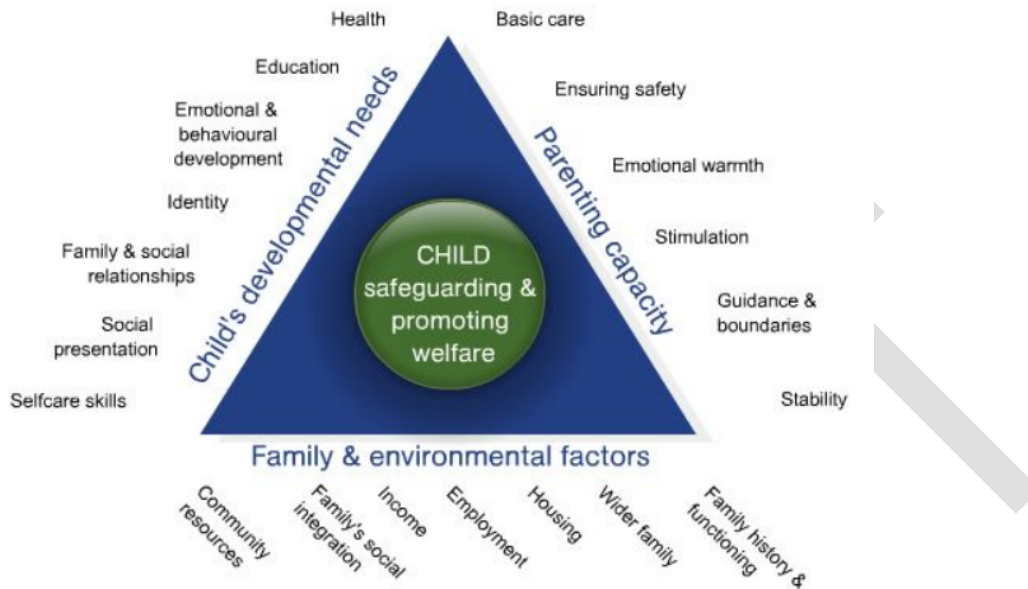
We will listen to how children and young people are doing in terms of their happiness, their health and wellbeing, their feelings about where they live, whether they feel they belong, their relationships with family, friends, people of different backgrounds and statutory services, such as health and the Police, their educational achievement and skills, and their hopes for adult life.

We will support children and their families to build resilience, to embed the Bradford Adversity, Trauma & Resilience Strategy and, more specifically, support babies, children, young people and their families to recognise and build on these factors.

Factors that promote resilience during childhood (see Figure 1) include: fostering a protective relationship with an adult caregiver where the adult recognises and

responds to the baby's/child's needs; developing social and emotional skills; accessing peer support; and participating in communities and activities.

**Figure 1 Protective factors in childhood**



Bradford District's success in securing the City of Culture 2025 is in large part due to the energy, creativity and commitment of our young people. Going forward, their continued involvement in the City of Culture and with our Child Friendly initiative will be key to both being successful and sustainable.

This Strategy sits within the context of the United Nations international human rights and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child and the rights of children and young people with disabilities which are encompassed in the United Nations convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In seeking to meet the needs of and in designing services for children and young people, partners are asked to consider the values, principles and priorities set out in this document.

Whilst this strategy will have a clear action plan to tackle identified issues, the Children, Young People and Families Executive (CYPF Executive) and partners will also champion babies, children and young people in other district arenas, such as: Wellbeing Board, the district's Anti-Poverty Co-ordination Group, Sustainable Food Partnership, Start for Life, Living Well, and through links with the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership's priorities for children, young people and families, etc. This will ensure that a wider set of challenges can be addressed and enable children and young people to focus on their happiness and success.

The action plan to be developed alongside this strategy aims to ensure delivery against its outcomes and priorities.

### **About Bradford District**

Nearly a third of our population is aged under 20, making us one of the youngest district's in the UK. We are also diverse, with those from ethnic minority backgrounds

also forming a third of our 546,400 strong population, and with more than 150 languages being spoken within the district.

Geographically, our district includes the city of Bradford itself, the large town of Keighley and a number of smaller towns and village, many with their own strong and distinctive identities.

Outstanding landscapes complement historically important architecture alongside a rich heritage and vibrant contemporary cultural scene. Ilkley Moor, Haworth and Brontë Country, Saltaire World Heritage Site and the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford city centre, amongst a host of other sites, attract 10m visitors each year.

We are one of the best connected cities in the UK internationally and the scale, diversity and productive potential of our district is reflected in its strong, broad-based, innovative and entrepreneurial business community, which is part of an overall local economy worth in excess of £9.5bn.

The district has a strong and committed network of voluntary and community organisations with an estimated 30,000 regular volunteers and 100,000 occasional volunteers. The spirit of our communities is a tangible asset that we want to build on to develop and deliver our shared objectives.

Public services and the voluntary and community sector in the district have a strong track record of working together in mature and effective partnerships and its work to bring communities together and promote participation is among the most innovative to be found anywhere in the world.

We have excellent assets to help us support our children and young people to be happy, healthy, and to develop to their full potential, such as: the expertise of Born in Bradford, award winning youth and social cohesion projects; such as The Linking Network, integrated careers and vocational skills programmes, the University of Bradford's achievement as the number one UK University for social mobility, fantastic programmes such as the Bradford for Everyone Programme (one of five integration pilot areas in the country), Better Start Bradford, ActEarly, JU:MP, the regions first Adversity, Trauma and Resilience Programme and the Department of Education's Priority Education Investment Area programme to tackle attainment in the district.

### **The challenges the District must overcome**

There are also significant challenges to overcome if we are to achieve our ambition for our children and young people, such as:

#### **Inequalities:**

There are inequalities that exist within all our challenges. Inequalities can start early in life, in terms of the economic and social environment that children are born into. They can be exacerbated by varying levels of access and attendance in education, health-care, community and service settings, such as:

- Bradford District's rate of infant mortality is the 10th highest in England and the highest in Yorkshire
- Bradford District has the 4th highest rate of child poverty in the UK.
- Two in five children here grow up in poverty

- One in eight children have a diagnosable mental health disorder
- Bradford District is young and growing and it is expected that the onset of mental health difficulties will grow by 10 percent in the next 10 years
- One in five child deaths could be avoided if children living in the most deprived areas had the same mortality rate as those living in the least deprived
- Children living in the most deprived areas of the district are four times as likely to die as those in other areas
- A quarter of the district's 10-11 year- olds are obese.

To effectively close the health and attainment gap, a multi-faceted, determined and collective effort is required. Early interventions and prevention of poor health during childhood will be key, as will more focused support for the children, families, communities and groups who experience the most acute inequality and marginalisation.

**Poverty:** Whilst the district includes some of the wealthiest areas in northern England, it is also the fifth most income-deprived in the country. Some 266,000 people live in the poorest areas and nearly one third of our children currently live in poverty.

**Education and skills inequalities:** Progress in closing the attainment gaps in primary, secondary and Post 16 education has slowed. The gaps in educational attainment between the district and the national average are the same or worse than pre-pandemic. However, whilst the adult skills base remains relatively low, it is slowly improving. The most obvious and quickest way to lift families out of poverty is to ensure that adults are able to work, and that work is well paid, meaningful and with progression opportunities.

**Move to a Children and Families' Trust:** The rate of improvement by the Council in its provision of children's social care has led to the creation of Bradford Children and Families' Trust which is due to be operational from April 2023. Whilst considered positive, resources are being used to: manage the process, manage staff uncertainty, and to ensure partner organisations and all stakeholders are engaged.

**The pandemic and its legacy:** We also know that many of our children, young people and their families were negatively impacted through the Covid-19 pandemic – some saw their education suffer, others felt isolated, many experienced their mental health declining, many saw their families' standard of living reduce, experiencing stress and depression directly or through those around them. Some will have lost loved ones, or are experiencing long Covid, or are experiencing life with their parents, guardians or care-givers who are suffering from long Covid.

The pandemic also exposed and widened inequalities that were already there: with those families living on low incomes, those from minority backgrounds and those people and families living with disabilities, being more severely negatively affected than other groups.

Research<sup>1</sup> completed during the Covid-19 pandemic by Born in Bradford highlighted how a national health crisis could exacerbate inequalities. For example, an estimated one in three of families across Bradford District worried about their job security, one

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bradfordresearch.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/BiB-Covid-19-First-1000-Briefing-V2.0.pdf>

in four worried about paying their rent or mortgage during the pandemic, with one in 10 experiencing severe financial and food insecurity. Local research<sup>2</sup> during this time also exposed these key inequalities in our district:

- social, emotional and mental health impact
- educational disadvantage
- digital exclusion, and
- food poverty.

**Cost of living crisis and the economy:** The legacy of the pandemic, and other international events, has brought about the worst inflation in the UK for over 40 years along with the highest interest rates for 14 years. The stress and pressure experienced by our families, who were already experiencing low income, is increasing, and many families who were previously 'getting by' are now also facing hardship.

**Resources:** The district has high levels of need and demand for public services and a limited ability to raise income locally. This can lead to more resources being needed to manage crises rather than to develop and improve provision and support.

Our children and young people are our greatest asset, and if they are to have the opportunity to realise their full potential, we must all work together to ensure better life chances are secured for them.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bradfordresearch.nhs.uk/family-and-community-impacts-of-covid-19/>

# **What we have been told is important**

## **By our children and young people**

### **Education**

#### ***What matters to our children and young people?***

- Recognition of the pressures on young people, sometimes compounded by school, and its impact on wellbeing and mental health. Children want to enjoy lessons and learning.
- An emphasis on support to improve attendance and behaviour, including alternatives to punitive school behaviour policies such as isolation.
- A rich curriculum offer that recognises subjects such as art.
- Racism: children and young people told us that racism is a concern.
- Celebrating Bradford District's culture, history and future through City of Culture 2025.
- Offer from schools of more vocational education and better preparation for life and work. This includes teaching young people how to get the jobs that they want, more vocational education and better preparation for life and work.
- Having access to high quality, tailored and planned life skills development as well as careers advice and guidance. Aspirations are low because jobs are low paid.
- Employer recruitment practices should focus on competencies and skills not time or experience.
- Families lack resources to support young people and access to basic services such as transport and digital are limited by affordability.

### **Physical and Mental Health**

#### ***What matters to our children and young people?***

- Greater recognition of mental health issues and issues around identity, sexuality and race. Safe spaces in schools and the community for young people.
- More, better and earlier availability of support services for wellbeing and mental health. This includes ensuring schools train staff and students as ambassadors for mental health, and mental health first aiders.
- Young people know what good emotional support from their friends, families, communities and services should look like and want to be involved in designing services. Waiting times for mental health services are unacceptable. More community support, e.g. youth cafes, and opportunities for the arts.
- Some children and young people experience their environment and lives very differently to others: girls, and LGBTQ+ children and young people report lower levels of happiness, healthiness and safety than their peers. Young people aged 16+ years report lower levels of satisfaction with their physical and mental health than their younger peers. Children and young people in inner city areas report more dissatisfaction with the levels of crime, cleanliness and litter in their environment; those in towns or rural areas report fewer activities and opportunities.



*“It’s harder for my mum to get meals together because stuff is too expensive.”*

## **Safe Homes, Places and Communities**

### ***What matters to our children and young people?***

- To live in clean and safe spaces, free from fear of crime and intimidation, and with more community action and cohesion.
- More affordable or free services in their local community; particularly youth services that develop their social networks and connections.
- Children want to be involved in their communities but don’t always know how to do this.
- Community hubs to support children and their families where they live, including access to learning resources, internet access and digital skills.

*“Bigger children and teenagers sometimes go to the parks and they make me feel scared.”*

- Children’s families and friends are very important to them. They want to live and thrive in safe and warm homes. When they leave their homes they want the whole community to take care of their environment. They want street lighting and to be able to safely move around either on their own or with friends.
- Young people report that they want clean streets, no litter and clean air. They want traffic to be reduced and drivers to take care and not speed.
- Parks and green spaces and playgrounds are very important to children and young people and meet a variety of needs. Teenagers want places to hang out with friends that are safe and accessible.
- Children and young people want to be able to shop and access services locally. They want affordable options in terms of what to do, what to eat and where to hang out.

## **Participation and Voice**

### ***What matters to our children and young people?***

- Young people want more involvement in decision making and the opportunity to have a voice and influence by working directly with councillors and decision makers
- They want to see evidence that their voice has an impact and leads to change
- Young people with SEND tell us that they want to be more involved in decisions that affect them and be able to access information in the way they find easiest - this might be in person as well as online.

- Children and young people want adults and organisations to ensure their voices are heard before policies are formed and to “always tell us what you are doing for us and why. And to do this forever”.

***Through Bradford’s Citizen Panel of young people and the Pandemic Recovery Summary we have also heard that:***

- Wellbeing and mental health needs to be supported
- Racism impacts young people
- The cost of living crisis is impacting young people and their families

***From younger children through their parents, service providers and other advocates:***

- Access to good quality childcare and funded places for two year-olds for those that are eligible.
- Access to family hubs, health visitors, play and learn sessions, support for healthy weight and nutrition, speech and language development.

**What our children and young people would like to change about schools:**

- Pressure and stress from school impacts on health, mental health and wellbeing.
- They sometimes receive a hard time for attendance
- They struggle to enjoy lessons.
- Schools start too early and young people find it hard to concentrate.
- Issues around sexuality, identity and race not taken seriously enough.
- Struggle to assert individuality through hair, dress, uniform, etc.
- Cost of living crisis is affecting them
- The CYP Mental Health coalition raised concerns re. punitive approaches and subsequent impact on mental health and wellbeing

**By our services, partners and professionals**

***What matters to our children, young people and families from the view of our services, partners and professionals***

- There are increasing pressures on parents/carers. The cost of living crisis, on top of other crises, i.e. Covid-19 and the impact of mental health.
- Inequalities are getting worse.
- Children and young people are becoming isolated due to costs of IT and transport.
- Diagnoses, e.g. of autism, doesn’t always provide the support that is expected.
- The ‘snowball effect’ impact that the withdrawal of services can have on communities.

**What our services, partners and professionals would like to change:**

- There is a lack of support and capacity for mental health needs in the system. Waiting lists are too long.

- Better communication and joining up of services between all partners, this includes:
  - Ensuring that families are directed to the right services at the earliest opportunity
  - Ensuring children with SEND and their families access the Local Offer
  - English language skills development is needed by people born in the UK as well as those accessing ESOL
  - Expectations around information sharing for vulnerabilities and incidents should be standard for all partners, including the VCS
  - Reducing the burden on schools through better signposting to statutory services and VCS.
- Longer term plans and more sustainability to ensure:
  - Resources are maximised and shared more effectively
  - Services don't end suddenly and then restart, and
  - Risk of losing 'organisational memory' is reduced.
- Partnership working with schools - VCS organisations report that they cannot always have the right conversation at the right time with the right person
- Schools' inconsistent approaches to the VCS can mean delays or inconsistencies in the support provided to children and families
- A more joined up approach to supporting improving attendance for children and young people, including understanding the root causes of poor attendance and persistent absence
- Improving parental engagement in schools and their children's education and development
- Ensuring that the opportunities and risks of digital provision are understood. For example, mental and physical health promotion, protection from harm including gaming and gambling.

### **What the data and other evidence tells us**

Other relevant quantitative and qualitative analysis is provided in Appendix 2: Data and Evidence Summary.

## Our guiding principles



The strategy and action plan have been developed with regard to the following principles and Bradford District's Shared Values, which are:

- We **RESPECT** ourselves, each other and our communities
- We **CARE** for each other and treat each other with kindness
- We **SHARE** ideas, resources, knowledge and skills as well as our challenges
- We **PROTECT** each other and the world we share so that we can be happy healthy and safe

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The Children's, Young People and Families Executive (CYPF Executive), along with its district partners, is committed to ensuring that all our children and young people have equity of access to the support available to meet their needs, that they are treated fairly, that services and provision meet their diverse needs, and that they have opportunities to meet with children and young people from different backgrounds and have opportunities to benefit from services and activities either offered to all, or those available to meet their specific needs.

## **Safeguarding and Early Intervention**

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

We want to ensure that our most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people are protected from harm, and that they and their families are provided with the services and support to enable them to secure their rights to maximise their potential. We recognise that many children's and families' needs are complex, that a lack of financial and other resources, and or language or cultural obstacles, can make it difficult for families to access support or care.

Intervening early, through recognised and effective Prevention and Early Help mechanisms is key to ensuring babies, children, young people and families are supported. Prevention and Early Help is a high priority both nationally and at a local level, and in Bradford District we are fully committed to going further in our Family Hubs Start for Life programme within Bradford District's Prevention and Early Help Strategy.

This is a collaborative approach, focusing on the first 1001 days and prevention and promotion of health, to avoid problems either before they happen or from getting worse. We will identify needs early but we also recognise that it's never too late for early help to make a difference.

We will promote healthy, open and honest relationships; within families, between families and the workers providing support, and across our partnerships. How people get along with and support each other is key, particularly to support each other through times of change and or difficulty. We recognise that fostering and building positive social connections are essential to everyone's wellbeing.

The babies, children and young people who are most in need in the district deserve better. Children must have outstanding social work support. We will work in partnership with families and agencies to safely reduce the number of children who are in care/subject to Child Protection Plans and the children in need, open to statutory services.

## **Child Friendly Bradford District: Giving children, young people and families a voice and influence**

We have an ambition to put the voice and influence of children, young people and families at the heart of everything we do. In November 2022, we launched our Child Friendly Bradford District initiative. This approach, rooted in Article 12 of the United

Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, states that children and young people should have a voice and influence when adults make decisions that affect their lives.

The district's Child Friendly initiative will seek to create an organisational culture where children and young people are informed of their rights and where services enable them to have a meaningful voice and influence, working restoratively with them as equal stakeholders and empowering them to have a sense of ownership over our district and the services they access.

In Spring 2022 as part of a Foundational Year working with UNICEF UK, we undertook a localities survey to inform the contents of this strategy. Working with partners in the Youth Service and Localities Teams, over 4,000 children and young people were asked face-to-face what their priorities were for the district. We have used these views to shape this strategy and will continue to work with them to enable them to have a voice and influence over the actions we will take to address these priorities.

A summary of what we have heard during our consultations can be found in the section above 'What we have been told is important' and in Appendix 2 - Evidence and Consultation Summary.

### **Child Friendly Bradford District**

Our vision to create a more Child Friendly district is based on the underpinning principles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. We have an ambition for all our children and young people to be aware of their rights and for the organisations across our district-wide partnership to help ensure these rights are met.

We want all our children and young people to have the opportunity to be active citizens who have a voice and influence. We want them to understand our systems of democracy and governance and to be empowered to work in partnership with us to help create better outcomes for them and their peers.

In a Child Friendly District, we will create a culture where we celebrate their achievements and will engage with a wide range of organisations to unlock new partnerships and create more opportunities to make our district a better place for children and young people to live and grow up in.

### **Voice and participation of children and families**

We have engaged with children, young people, their advocates and practitioners to ensure the voice of the child is reflected in this strategy. Some of what we have heard can be found in the section above 'What we have been told is important' and in Appendix 1: Methodology and Consultation Summary. We have also talked to some families and family practitioners.

We also engaged with over 700 families to help shape the new 'Good Food strategy' and 'Physical Activity strategy'. These two strategies play a key role in contributing towards the 'physical and mental health' ambition of the Children and Young People's Strategy.

The Children, Young People and Families Executive (CYPF Executive) and its partners welcome the district's Child Friendly Initiative. We will support and work

closely with it as a way in which the voice and participation of children and young people can continue, that they can influence how this strategy is implemented, and that children and young people are able to effect change locally.

### **Research and evidence informed practice**

This strategy has been informed by a wealth of research findings and other quantitative and qualitative evidence: Appendix 2 provides a summary of this research and evidence along with a list of its sources.

The Children, Young People's and Families Executive (CYPF Executive) and its partners will continue to seek and make available evidence to inform practice and will continue to engage with and draw on evidence from ActEarly, Born in Bradford, Better Start Bradford, Public Health, Centre for Applied Education Research, the Alliance for Life Chances, etc. It will also participate with the district's new Council-led Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC).

The collaboration, spanning research, university and public sector organisations, will research the causes and impact of health inequality with the aim of informing local, regional and national policy to tackle the impacts of this inequality.

The CYPF Executive will support HDRC and will ensure it considers its findings in its strategies, plans and actions.

### **Partnership working**

Partnership has been crucial to development of this strategy. It has been developed in partnership with children, young people and families. It has also been developed collectively by a range of strategic partners covering the local authority, police, health, education (early years, primary, secondary, tertiary, higher education), voluntary sector, and private sector.

Partnership working will be critical to the success of this strategy. All partners will have crucial roles in developing, supporting, embedding, evaluating and challenging this strategy. Specific actions will be outlined in the action plan developed to implement this strategy. We need to build on the strengths and assets that individual partners bring and support them and challenge them appropriately.

However, to really make a difference for children and young people, agencies, organisations, teams, departments, and services must act collectively and be "acting as one". The collective ownership of this strategy needs to be maintained and enhanced. There is more to do to develop, deepen, and strengthen partnership working. Inspections have recognised that there is still much to do in improving and developing how partners work together. There is also much to do in ensuring partnerships are equitable and effective, and genuinely deliver in the best interests of children, young people, and families. This includes ensuring:

- Partnership with children, young people and families is meaningful, comprehensive, inclusive and effective
- All the Districts' strategic partnerships are aligned to, and engaged with delivering this strategy
- Further strategies and planning take account of this strategy
- Areas of partnership practice are identified and built upon

- Barriers to effective partnership working and areas for improvement are addressed and identified.

Specific actions in the action plan aim to address improving and developing partnership working.

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## Themes and Sustainable Development Goals

The table below maps the Children and Young People’s Strategy’s themes to the United Nations Sustainable Developmental Goals.

### UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS BY THEME

Children & Young People's Plan Theme	Sustainable Development Goals
Education	<p><b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION</p>  <p>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</p>
Physical & Mental Health	<p><b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>  <p>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages.</p>
Safe Homes Places & Communities	<p><b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY</p>  <p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>  <p><b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>  <p>Achieve gender equality &amp; empower all women and girls.</p> <p>Make cities &amp; human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient &amp; sustainable.</p> <p>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p>
Skills Development	<p><b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION</p>  <p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>  <p><b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>  <p>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</p> <p>Decent work &amp; economic growth</p> <p>Reduce inequality within and among countries</p>

## **Education**

### **Our ambition**

We want all our children and young people to enjoy learning throughout the whole of their childhood, whether this is: in their home, pre-school or other educational establishment settings, digital settings, libraries, youth and community settings, parks and play areas, or other outdoor settings.

Each child should have the opportunity to reach their full educational potential regardless of their background or circumstances.

This strategy aims to ensure the learning and education of those children and young people who have special or additional needs, who are more vulnerable, or who are on the fringes of vulnerability, is supported and not compromised as a result of their vulnerability. This includes access to skills for life learning such as: sex and relationships, healthy lifestyles, citizenship and democracy, climate action and sustainability, and diversity and community cohesion.

We will ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) receive the support they require in school and at home, and to access other activities.

### **Priorities**

- 1. Improved partnership working between preschool childcare, schools, statutory services and the voluntary and community sector that prioritises the needs of the child and family**
- 2. Ensure that all children have the opportunity to: enjoy learning and school, have good attendance, and that those who need additional support can, and do access it**
- 3. Ensure that children are ready for the next stage (Early Years, Primary, Secondary or Post 16) by improving educational outcomes and access to 'skills for life' education; in particular, for pupils who have SEND, are disadvantaged, are care experienced or who have other vulnerabilities, and that for these groups this carries through to support for their transition to adulthood.**

## **Physical and mental health**

### **Our ambition**

We want all our children and young people to enjoy the best physical, emotional and mental health possible. For this they need to live in supportive and protective home, educational and community environments. We want them to have opportunities to develop habits and routines that will support their health throughout the whole of their lives.

For children and young people living in different circumstances and with different needs, this will mean taking different action. Therefore, we will tailor actions to ensure they are suitable and equitable across the range of circumstances, needs and settings that children and young people experience and occupy. As well as equity of opportunity we also aim for our children and young people to have equity of outcomes.

Our actions for positive and sustainable outcomes for children and young people are structured around the four pillars of Bradford District and Craven's health and care plan: Better Births, Prevention, Pathways and Services, and Complex Care. The work within these pillars reaches into the life and home of every family in the District; however, success is dependent upon effective partnerships and collaboration.

### **Priorities**

- 1. Ensure babies (and new mothers), children and young people have early access to, and a good experience of, wellbeing and mental health support**
- 2. Improve families' access to affordable and healthy food**
- 3. Ensure all children and young people can access active spaces and enhance opportunities to engage with sports and other physical activities to have fun and reduce sedentary behaviour.**

### **Safe Homes, Places and Communities**

#### **Our ambition**

We want all our children and young people to be safe and feel safe in all places and settings both within and outside of the district – including digital spaces. We want them to have the opportunity to have fun and enjoy themselves wherever they are.

We want them to be proud of their identity and to feel free and safe to express who they are, wherever they are.

We want our young people to have the opportunity to develop healthy intergenerational relationships within their own families, communities and those who provide services or work with them.

We also want them to have safe places they can go to remove themselves from harm, and to have people they can turn to for support at times appropriate to them.

We know that children and young people consider clean streets and lighting are important in making them feel safe, we will ensure that they are able to influence local decisions.

#### **Priorities**

- 1. Ensure that babies', children's and young people's homes, and their wider physical, social and digital environments are safe, clean and sustainable. Children are protected from all types of harm**
- 2. Ensure children and young people have opportunities to have fun and enjoy their local leisure, social, and cultural opportunities**
- 3. Ensure that our children and young people have safe, clean, well-lit and accessible places and spaces where they can play, socialise and be physically active**
- 4. Ensure our children and young people are confident to be themselves in different spaces and be supported to be safe and have a sense of belonging wherever they may be.**

### **Skills Development**

#### **Our ambition**

We want all our young people to have opportunities to develop and gain the skills needed to attain decently paid and sustainable work and to live healthy, fun, safe, and fulfilling lives.

Regardless of their background or circumstances, we want them to be aware of what opportunities are available to them – both locally and further afield, the skills and education they need to enable them to take up those opportunities and how to access skills and educational support so that they have the opportunity to apply for work and careers that will meet their needs and aspirations.

We want to work with others, such as West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Department of Work and Pensions, The West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce etc. to ensure the basics required to support our young people to make their aspirations a reality are in place, such as flexible recruitment practices, affordable transport, and opportunities to participate in relevant work experience.

### **Priorities**

- 1. Ensure young people leave school with the right qualifications and skills, including life, social and independence skills, to pursue their chosen education, employment or training pathway and to live healthy, happy, fun, safe and fulfilling lives**
- 2. Ensure all children, young people and families have access to digital resources, provision and skills. Services must also be tailored and accessible, according to need**
- 3. Lift families out of poverty and into better paid work through targeted skills improvement and employment support.**

### **Impact Statements (How we will know that we have made a difference)**

- Every child to start out with the foundations for good health and wellbeing throughout their lives. We will have a 0-5 prevention and early help offer for families from birth to starting school. This will offer integrated and high quality early years care for all. It should help families provide warm, supportive and nurturing environments and ensure access to early play and learning opportunities for all children, especially those most in need. Success here will lead to a higher percentage of children starting school with a good level of development and succeeding in school.
- More of our children educated in good or outstanding schools, with high attendance rates, increased educational attainment and, most importantly, a reduction in the educational attainment gap between the most and least advantaged.
- Our young people making successful transitions into adult life; to reach adulthood with a sense of belonging, purpose, wellbeing and the skills and resilience they need to succeed. This means higher numbers of young people in school getting access to vocational courses in schools, more apprenticeships, higher attainment at Level 3 and a reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, training or employment.
- Our young people enjoying healthy childhoods which lay the foundations for long and healthy adult lives. This means living in communities which promote healthy living and have services to support those in need. This will be reflected in lower

obesity rates, increased physical activity, better support services for young people with mental health problems and fewer families living in poor housing.

- Our communities to be safe, inclusive and sustainable. This will be reflected in lower crime rates, increased sense of community safety, better housing conditions, development of green spaces, parks and play facilities, the development of a full cultural engagement strategy and movement toward integrated local service provision.
- Our young people to have a voice through newly created and improved participation and engagement structures. These may include new political engagement forums for children and young people, such as: citizens' juries, local community impact assessments, a youth council and youth overview and scrutiny committee.
- Children and young people across the district will have access to positive, enjoyable and regular out-of-school hours' activities and opportunities.

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# Appendix 1: Methodology and Consultation Summary

## Evidence gathering

Evidence to inform the objectives and priorities in the Strategy came from a number of sources, including:

- Bradford District's interim Children and Young People's Plan 2021
- Published data on the demographics and needs of Bradford District's children and families, e.g. LAIT, ONS data, DfE data on special needs, performance, attendance, exclusions, etc.
- Published data on the performance of local partners, e.g. City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, school performance statistics
- Research undertaken by Born in Bradford and the Centre for Applied Education Research
- Local organisations' research with families, e.g. Better Start Bradford, National Literacy Trust, The Linking network
- Data from council-commissioned surveys of children and young people's views, e.g. public health surveys, localities surveys, etc.
- Local and national government policy and strategy documents, e.g. Our Plan for Bradford District 2021-25, the UK Government's Levelling Up white paper, DfE Priority Investment Areas
- Information underpinning the Child Friendly Bradford District initiative.

## Engagement with children and families

We engaged with children, young people and families during summer 2022, supported by the Holiday Activities Fund (HAF):

- Better Start Bradford
- Bradford Libraries
- Sangat Centre Keighley
- Peak Tuition

## Engagement with professionals and partners

The development of this strategy has been informed by collaboration and engagement with many partners and professionals across Bradford District. Some were directly involved in the working group and others were consulted on as part of the process of identifying priorities and updating the themes from the interim Children and Young people's plan 2021, those involved or consulted:

- Education Partnerships:
  - Carlton Bolling Academy
  - Dandelion
  - Motive8
  - Schofield Sweeny
- Bradford VCS Young Lives Forum:
  - AWARE - Airedale and Wharfedale Autism Resource
  - Barnardos
  - BD4 Community Trust

- Bradford Council
- Bradford District Museum and Galleries
- Carers' Resource - Bradford
- Community Action
- Dance United Yorkshire
- JAMES
- Play Bradford
- Step 2 Young People's Health
- The Linking Network
- JU:MP
- SAFE Bradford Taskforce
- Born in Bradford and Age of Wonder
- National Literacy Trust
- City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's Children's Service teams, including Children's Social Care, Early Help and Prevention, Youth Service, SEND services, etc.; Public Health; Employment and Skills; Place, etc.
- Bradford Libraries
- Bradford Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford District Care Trust
- Bradford District and Craven Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- West Yorkshire ICB
- West Yorkshire Police
- Consultation with partnership boards, including the Youth Justice Board, Prevention and Early Help, Children and Families Health and Care Board, SEND Strategic Partnership, Employment and Skills, etc.



## Appendix 2: Data and Evidence Summary

### The impact of inequalities on children and their families

- **Child poverty in Bradford District:** 38 percent of children under 16 live in low income families - 60,000 children. 47,000 children aged under 16 live in families classed as being in absolute poverty. 3rd highest percentage of children in relative poverty in the country and 2nd highest percentage in absolute poverty (before housing costs).
- **Persistent disadvantage:** Children who experience persistent disadvantage leave school on average 18-22 months behind their peers. A child has an 80 percent chance of passing maths and English at GCSE if they neither live in poverty nor require the support of a social worker. This figure drops to 65 percent when a child lives in poverty or needs a social worker.
- **Deprived areas and child protection plans:** Research has shown that children living in the most deprived areas are up to 10 times more likely to require a Child Protection Plan than their peers (so reducing the multiple stresses that poverty brings is key to our strategy).
- **Unemployment claimant count rates:** Bradford District has the 8th highest local authority claimant count unemployment rate in the country. It has the 3rd highest of all city authorities (after Birmingham and Wolverhampton). For young people, Bradford District has the 3rd highest rate in the UK of all local authorities and the 2nd highest of all city authorities (after Wolverhampton).
- **Life expectancy - low and high incomes:** There is a ten-year gap in life expectancy between the poorest and the wealthiest in our district. The poorest in our communities can expect to live 21 years of their lives in poor health.
- **Child death rates:** Rates of child deaths are roughly four times higher in the most deprived area than the least deprived areas. (and infant mortality is two-thirds higher than the average in England. The rate of child deaths for those from South Asian backgrounds is three times higher than from White ethnic backgrounds. Data analysis from Bradford District child death reviews show this excess is associated with a mixture of genetic and social factors.
- **Negative impact of poverty at birth:** National research has shown that even a transient experience of poverty at birth increases the risks of dying in early adulthood by 50 percent. For every one percent increase in child poverty, there was a 5.8 per 100,000 increase in infant mortality. Whole family wellbeing around birth is crucial, as children whose mothers were stressed in pregnancy are twice as likely to have mental health problems as teenagers.
- **Income related benefits and impact on mental health:** The prevalence of disorders such as anxiety and depression is twice as high in children living in households receiving income related benefits and three times as high for children living in households in receiving disability related benefit (NHS Digital 2017).
- **Toxicity of poverty:** National research shows living in persistent poverty is absolutely toxic for a whole range of children's health outcomes. These children have three to four times the risk of mental health problems, double the risk of obesity and double the risk of long-term chronic illness. Living in persistent poverty doubles the risk of death in early adulthood, death from suicide, accidents and cancers.

- **Obesity and our young people:** A quarter of 10 to 11-year-olds in Bradford District and Craven are obese.

## Children and young people's health and wellbeing

- **Demand outstrips capacity:** Healthy Families at Home reports that capacity vs demand is high – number of referrals, take up of offer and retention within the intervention all higher than expected. The end result is large numbers waiting for service and due to length of intervention waiting time is up to one year.
- **Rising prevalence of childhood obesity:** Since COVID-19 (NCMP): across reception to year six the total prevalence of excess weight has increased from 31 percent in 2018/19 to 37 percent in 2020/21.
- **Deprived areas see increased rates of obesity:** Children living in the most deprived areas were more than twice as likely to be obese than those living in the least deprived areas. Bradford District is the 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority area (out of 317) (2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation).
- **District's children less active than their England peers:** In 2020/21 33.2 percent of children and young people in Bradford District were classed as 'less active', that is, they do less than 30 minutes of exercise per day compared to 32.4 percent of their peers in England.
- **Higher sedentary time:** The various Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) aimed at curbing the spread of COVID19 have also led to higher levels of sedentary time. i.e. Time spent sitting or stationary.
- **Factors contributing to excess weight:** Low levels of physical activity and high sedentary time are two contributing factors leading to excess weight, however we know it is also influenced by a wide range of other factors including; gender, how old we are, the genes we've inherited from our parents and grandparents, how we live our day to day lives, whether we're able to access healthy food or have a good network of friends, family or other support, and crucially where we live, work and play.
- **Low proportions of first feed breastmilk:** Bradford District was 59.3 percent in 2018/19 compared to England average of 67.4 percent [Child and Maternal Health - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://phe.org.uk/child-and-maternal-health-data)
- **Special educational needs:** In 2021, approximately 19k 0-25 year olds in Bradford District had an identified educational health care plan or a special educational need supported by their school or setting.
- **Take up of immunisations:** In some wards one in four children are not up to date with their immunisations.
- **Poor oral health:** By age five, many of our children are starting to present with very poor oral health. Access to dentists is an issue locally as in 2017 only 42 percent of 0-4 year olds in Bradford District had seen a dentist in the previous 12 months (the England average was 38 percent).
- **Exacerbated mental health challenges:** There is mounting concern that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing challenges with mental health services. Even before the pandemic, the prevalence of mental disorders in

children and young people was increasing. The rate of probable mental disorder has increased in 5-16 year-olds, from one in nine in 2017, to one in six in 2020, nationally. In particular, demand for support for eating disorders has risen in the last few years, and self-harming presentations from young people at hospital is rising.

### **Children's Social Care**

- **Rate of children in care:** Bradford District's rate of Children in Care is significantly higher than national or regional averages: 103 per 10,000 in 2022, compared with 70 per 10,000 in England and 81 per 10,000 in Yorkshire and Humberside. The rate in Bradford District rose dramatically between 2021 (94 per 10,000) and 2022; this reflects the level of need in the district and the impact of the challenges outlined in the body of the strategy.
- **Children in need:** Bradford District's rate of Children in Need is also higher than national or regional averages: 419.2 per 10,000 in 2022; however, this represents a slight decline on 2021, where the rate was 443.7 per 10,000.
- **Child protection Plans:** The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) in Bradford District in 2022 was 688, equating to a rate of 48.2 per 10,000. This is in line with the regional average of 48.5 but higher than the England average of 42.1. There has been a decline in the rate of children with a CPP in the district, and regionally and nationally since 2019.

## Appendix 3: Proposed Outcomes Framework

### Theme 1: Education

ID	Measure	Source
1.1	Early Years Foundation Stage: Percentage/number of children achieving a Good Level of Development and key groups	DfE
1.2	Key Stage 2: Percentage/number of pupils achieving reading, writing and maths at the end expected standard and key groups	DfE
1.3	Key Stage 4: Percentage/number of pupils achieving English and maths at grade 4+/5+ and key groups	DfE
1.4	Attendance and Persistent Absence rates and key groups	DfE
1.5	Suspension rates and number of permanent exclusions	DfE
1.6	SEND: Numbers of CYP being assessed for an EHCP in Bradford	DfE

Age of Wonder measures focused on School.

### Theme 2: Physical and Mental Health

ID	Measure	Source
2.1	Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth - current method	NHS England
2.2	Reception: Prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity)	NHS Digital
2.3	Year 6: Prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity)	NHS Digital
2.4	Rate of children admitted to hospital for accidental and deliberate injuries (combined; per 10,000)	OHID
2.5	Rate of children admitted to hospital for accidental and deliberate injuries (combined; per 10,000)	OHID

Age of Wonder measures focused on Mental Wellbeing; Physical Health.

### Theme 3: Safe homes, places and communities

ID	Measure	Source
3.1	First time entrants to the youth justice system	MoJ
3.2	Homelessness - households with dependent children owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act	DLUHC
3.3	Children in care	DfE
3.4	Children killed and seriously injured (KSI) on England's roads	DfT
3.5	Proportion police calls to domestic violence at home where child present	Police

3.6	Rate of child mortality (1-17 years) per 1000	ONS
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Age of Wonder measures focused on Socioeconomics and Health Behaviours; Identity and Discrimination; Environment.

#### Theme 4: Skills Development

ID	Measure	Source
4.1	16 to 17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known	DfE
4.2	Children in absolute low income families (under 16s)	DWP
4.3	Children in relative low income families (under 16s)	DWP
4.4	Proportion of 19 year olds achieving Level 3 qualifications	DfE
4.5	Proportion of adults qualified to Level 3 or above	ONS

Age of Wonder measures focused on Digital and Social Media; Socioeconomics and Health Behaviours.