

Wandsworth Council

Best Start in Life Plan

*Wandsworth's ambition for every child to
have the support they need to thrive*

2026 – 2029

An easy-read version, a Plan on a Page is in the process of being developed with parents and carers to accompany the Best Start in Life Strategic Plan.



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Our Best Start in Life Strategic Plan is ambitious, with its fundamental aim to ensure that all children achieve the best outcomes for their future, their needs are identified and supported early, and they are school ready at five.

1. Forewords

1.1 Foreword by Samira, Parent and Community Champion

My name is Samira and I am a mother of three children, including a baby. I live in Battersea and my journey as a parent in Wandsworth really began when I found my local children's centre. When I had my first child, English was not my first language and a neighbour told me about Somerset Children's Centre, and walking through those doors changed everything for me. At first it was hard and a little scary, but the more I went, the more confident I became. I met other mothers, my child learned to socialise, and we both started to feel excited about going rather than staying at home feeling isolated.

Accessing services is like a tree - you start at the base, and then you discover all the branches, each offering new opportunities and support. Through play sessions, parenting courses and support from staff, I learned how to help my children grow, communicate and feel confident. My children gained so much from attending sessions from a young age – they were happy, settled and ready when it was time to start nursery and school. As a parent, being told “you are doing well” made a huge difference to my confidence. These spaces are not just for children; they are for parents too.

Over time, I began encouraging other mothers, especially from my own community, to come along. I always tell them: “don't stay at home, don't isolate yourself”. Being a new parent can be overwhelming. Feeling welcomed, seeing someone who understands your language and culture, and being made to feel “at home” matters. When parents feel comfortable, they come back – and they tell others.

This Best Start in Life Plan is important because it recognises how powerful early support can be for families. I hope it helps make sure that every parent and child, no matter their background, feel welcomed, informed and supported from the very beginning. When families are supported well, children thrive – and that benefits all of us.

1.2 Message from Kat Wyatt, Director of Children's Place and Partnerships

I am pleased to introduce Wandsworth Best Start in Life Plan “Wandsworth's ambition for every child to have the support they need to thrive”, which is partnership-owned and partnership-led.

Our plan creates an integrated, prevention-focused support system for families across the life course. It aligns universal services with targeted support pathways, and, crucially, embeds Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and emerging needs through dedicated professionals, coordinated multi-agency planning, and inclusive practice – ensuring early identification, connection and tailored support for every child and family.

In Wandsworth we are committed to ensuring that every child is safe, happy, healthy, heard and supported to thrive, irrespective of their background.

Our Best Start in Life Plan is ambitious within its vision to ensure that Wandsworth is the best place for babies, children and their families to grow up, thrive and reach a good level of development throughout their whole childhood.

Our vision is to develop an early help system that supports families from pregnancy to adulthood, through a range of evidenced-based interventions at all levels, both universal and targeted, ensuring that the right support is on hand at the right time whenever it is required.

The 'common outcome framework' will underpin our Strategic Plan, with a range of system -level actions that will support our delivery of outcomes. Our aim is that partners will align with the strategy and commit to being accountable for their role in supporting the Borough-wide action plan. In December 2025, over 60 dedicated professionals from Health, Education, Voluntary and Community Sector, Children's Services, Public Health, Libraries and Leisure came together with one

shared purpose: **to ensure every child in Wandsworth has the opportunity to thrive and reach a Good Level of Development (GLD).**



The room was alive with collaboration, connection, and a commitment to making a difference. We explored what is working well, how we can work together to challenge inequalities and sparked creative ideas that shaped the future of support for children and families. This Plan is informed by our data, partners feedback and parent/ carers.

2. Purpose of the Best Start in Life Plan

The building blocks of success are laid in the early years of a child's life, as they begin to communicate, build relationships, play and learn. Under the Government's Best Start in Life Strategy, Local Authorities have been given statutory improvement targets for the proportion of children aged 5 achieving a Good Level of Development. For Wandsworth, this target is **80%** by the end of the 2027/2028 academic year. As a borough, we are currently reaching **73%** of children achieving a Good Level of Development in summer 2025, outperforming both the national (**68%**) and London (**71%**) averages. This equates to **179** additional children achieving GLD to meet target. Locally, **57%** of children accessing Free School Meals (FSM) reach a good level of development which is above national average (**51%**). Our target is that by 2028, **66%** of children accessing Free School Meals will reach GLD. This equates to **45** additional children achieving GLD to meet the Government's target.

Giving children the best possible start in life is vital to **reducing inequalities and ensuring that every child can start school healthy, has the same opportunity to thrive and enjoy a good quality of life, whatever their background.** The Best Start in Life Local Partnership, comprising of Health, Education, Voluntary and Community sector, Children's Services and Public Health will achieve these targets by ensuring that every baby, child and their family, regardless of background, ethnicity, race or culture, receives fair, culturally competent and effective early support. Tackling inequalities is a central theme in our Best Start in Life Plan, Wandsworth Corporate Plan "[A fairer, compassionate, more sustainable Wandsworth](#)", as well as other partnership plans and strategies such as [Wandsworth Health and Care Plan](#) and the [Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

3. Introduction to Wandsworth Best Start in Life Plan

As a partnership we will deliver a place-based approach by embedding services within the community and bringing them closer to the families who need them most. We will support children from pre-birth to five, improve outcomes across the early years system, and ensure that support from **the Best Start in Life Local Partnership** is available in the right place at the right time.

Our Best Start in Life Family Hubs in Tooting, Battersea and Roehampton bring together Health, Education, Early years and wider services to give families a cohesive offer of support. **This multi-agency approach** prioritises prevention, connection and early intervention, giving every child the best possible foundations for learning, development, and long-term wellbeing.

Our Family Hubs underpin our Best Start in Life Strategic Plan and align our response to the Families First Partnership Programme and SEND Reforms, as the physical centre of our place-based reform approach, enabling seamless interactions between universal services, community-based help and children's social care (Family Help).

Our Partnership priorities for the next three years can be found on **Page 6**. Our Plan is grounded in evidence. **The needs assessment** on **Page 9** details the local needs of babies, children and families across our early years system, and our plans to address these needs and gaps in provision by strategically targeting programmes and making the best use of local assets and expertise.

Our delivery will be carried out in partnership across the early years system, tracked and tailored to continually drive practice through an outcomes framework which is available in **Appendix 1**. We are also thinking ahead, beyond 2028, beyond achieving 80% GLD, and beyond the age of five. We will support this through further developing high quality services, and activities that support children's development from pre-birth, early childhood, through to adulthood. This includes considering how innovative practice will be scaled.

We will continue to work with other London Local Authorities to develop a common outcomes framework, which will provide outcomes-based performance measurement against our Best Start in Life partnership priorities. As the framework is implemented in Wandsworth over the next three years, shared data standards and clear reporting expectations will support consistent implementation across local areas.

4. Our Vision and Best Start in Life Partnership Priorities

Our vision is to ensure babies, children and their parents receive the right support, at the right time to thrive physically, emotionally and developmentally. We will achieve this vision by delivering place-based, contextually and culturally informed support rooted in relational practice.

4.1 Our Priorities

Priority 1: Data, Evidence and Outcomes

Collaborate with partners to create joint data-sharing protocols, quarterly Best Start in Life dashboards and implement the performance and outcomes framework to improve the achievement of Early Learning Goals (ELG) and deliver Good Level of Development targets.

Priority 2: Early Learning

Develop a borough-wide early learning framework that defines the milestones contributing to ELG and provides a shared reference point for all professionals.

Priority 3: Parenting Support Offer

Provide accessible, evidence-based parenting support that is tailored to local need and co-designed by parents.

Priority 4: Early Communication and Language Needs

Improve early communication and language needs by establishing a shared, multi-agency communication pathway.

Priority 5: Community Outreach

Strengthen our outreach targeting families most in need.

Priority 6: Narrow Inequalities

Narrow inequalities and address disproportionality, particularly for boys and global majority children by working with partners from Health, Education, Voluntary and Community sector, Children's services and Public Health.

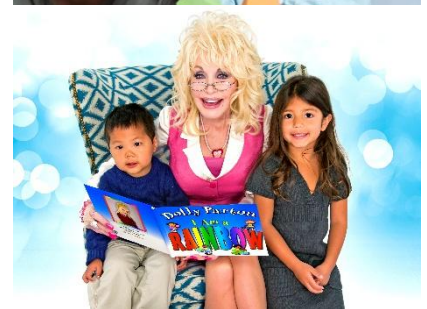
Priority 7: High-Quality, Affordable Childcare

Ensure every family has access to high-quality, affordable and flexible childcare that supports children's development and parents' work choices.

Priority 8: Workforce development

Invest in our workforce, equipping staff with the skills, confidence and support to work holistically with the whole family.

These priorities form our strategic aims for the next three years and key system shifts. A comprehensive Action Plan underpins our delivery.



This Plan is underpinned by a key theme **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Anti-racist practice**. We champion children and families' sense of belonging, identity and emotional wellbeing. Challenging inequality is at the heart of this strategic plan and influences every priority and commitment, in line with the wider corporate mission to **create a Fairer Wandsworth**. Our priorities are closely aligned with the Government's priorities in "Giving every child the best start in life" strategy, as well as local strategies such as [Youth Strategy](#), [Wandsworth SEND Strategy](#), Childcare Sufficiency Strategy and [Play Strategy](#) which set out our mission to make Wandsworth one of the best places to thrive and grow up in.

4.2 Our Values and Principles

As a Best Start in Life Local Partnership, we will achieve these priorities by ensuring we are adhering to the following principles:

- **Babies and children are at the heart of everything we do.**
- **People:** People come first. We care about people, those we serve and those who are part of our team. The relationships we build with children, families and our partners are central to the help we provide.
- **Place:** Our work with families is rooted in place. Wandsworth is a collection of connected places where development, community aspirations and economic opportunity meet.
- **Partnerships:** It takes a village. The Best Start Local partnership brings together Education, Health and care services, including Best Start Family Hubs, families, teachers, educators, libraries and the Voluntary and Community Sector to provide improved experiences and outcomes for all babies and children and their families. The voices of children are at the heart of decision-making.
- **Purpose:** Better never stops. Our work with families is purposeful. We are relentless about better outcomes, always learning, improving and adapting so Wandsworth's children can thrive.

The logic model on the next page demonstrates how the Wandsworth Best Start in Life Strategic Plan will drive up the numbers of children reaching a Good Level of Development locally and ensure that babies, children and their parents/carers are happy, healthy, actively engaged and supported in their learning and development. It serves both as an evidence-based tool and a tool for generating evidence.

5. Our Logic Model

Wandsworth Best Start in Life Logic Model

ACTIVITIES

Universal Activities

- Health Visiting core offer: antenatal visits, new-birth visits, 6-8-week checks, 1-year and 2-2½-year reviews
- Universal parenting information, early education and HLE promotion
- Open-access Family Hub sessions: play, infant groups, drop-ins
- Public health interventions: breastfeeding support, nutrition advice
- Information, advice and signposting across health, early years, SEND and housing.

Targeted Activities

1. Parenting programmes: evidence-based groups (e.g., Incredible Years, Triple P), domestic abuse groups, dad groups.
2. Perinatal mental health screening and brief interventions
3. Outreach to families experiencing poverty, isolation, poor housing
4. Targeted SLT early language interventions
5. SEND early inclusion support for 0–5s
6. Family Hub connector support (engagement, navigation, warm handovers)
7. Early Help assessments and Team Around the Family planning
8. Support for care-experienced parents and young parents

INPUTS

1. Family Hub Connectors
2. Registrars
3. Midwifery
4. Health Visiting
5. Speech and Language Therapy
6. Early Years CAMHS
7. Perinatal Mental Health Support
8. Domestic Abuse Support
9. Substance Misuse
10. Social Workers
11. DWP and Lifelong Learning
12. Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector such as Homestart.
13. Needs analysis

ONLINE DIGITAL OFFER

- Family Information Service

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES (0 to 12 months)

- **Confidence** - Parents feel more able to support their baby's development.
- **Wellbeing** - Maternal and parental mental health improves following early support.
- **Attachment** - Parent–infant bonding strengthens through responsive caregiving.
- **Breastfeeding** - More parents initiate and continue breastfeeding.
- **Engagement** - Families access Family Hubs and early-years services more consistently.
- **Early-language** - Babies experience more talk, play and interaction at home.
- **Identification** - Risks and needs are spotted earlier across agencies.
- **Quality** - HV, PMH and feeding contacts improve in timeliness and consistency.
- **Coordination** - Practitioners share information and hand over cases more effectively.
- **Trust** - Families feel respected, listened to and supported.

MEDIUM -TERM OUTCOMES (1 to 3 years)

- **Communication** - Toddlers show stronger speech, language and early communication.
- **Regulation** - Children develop better emotional regulation and social skills.
- **Nutrition** - Healthy eating, growth and routines become more stable.
- **Stability** - Families experience reduced stress and more predictable routines.
- **Safety** - Safeguarding concerns reduce, with fewer escalations.
- **Participation** - Children attend early education more regularly.
- **Parenting** - Positive parenting practices are sustained beyond programme completion.
- **Development** - More children meet expected milestones at the 2–2½-year check.
- **Inclusion** - Earlier and more effective SEND support improves developmental progress.
- **Equity** - Disadvantaged families experience fewer access gaps in early support.

LONG -TERM OUTCOMES (3 to 5+ years)

- **Attainment** - Narrower gaps in EYFSP/GLD and stronger school readiness.
- **Health** - Reduced inequalities in physical and mental health.
- **Resilience** - Families demonstrate greater stability and reduced crisis episodes.
- **Demand** - Fewer referrals to CSC, CAMHS and other specialist services.
- **Life-chances** - Children enter education with stronger developmental foundations.
- **Equity-impact** - Improved outcomes for IMD, SEND, EAL and other priority cohorts.
- **Sustainability** - System becomes more efficient through early intervention.
- **Community** - Stronger, more connected local networks support early years development.

MISSION

Our mission is to deliver a coherent, high-quality early years system that strengthens families, removes barriers, and ensures every baby and young child can thrive. We do this by integrating support around the whole family, prioritising prevention, and targeting resources where they can raise outcomes most and reduce inequities fastest. Through collaboration across health, education, Family Hubs, and the VCS, we will provide timely, evidence-informed support that drives meaningful, measurable improvements in children's development and family wellbeing.

VISION

We will deliver excellence by raising outcomes for every baby and young child, ensuring that all families- regardless of background or circumstance can thrive. Our ambition is to achieve equity across Wandsworth by removing barriers, closing gaps, and providing the right support at the right time through an integrated, high-quality Early Help system.

ASSUMPTIONS

System and Partnership

Collaboration - Partners (LA, NHS, VCS, early years settings) work consistently together and share responsibility for outcomes.

Whole-family practice - Assessments and plans consider all family needs.

Shared direction- Partners align with the BSIL plan, national guidance, Wandsworth Public Health priorities and the NHS Long Term Plan.

Workforce

Capacity - HV, PMH, SLT and Early Help teams have enough staff to deliver universal and targeted support.

Competence - Staff are trained in trauma-informed, systemic and strengths-based practice.

Consistency - Staff use shared tools and processes for assessment, planning and recording.

Engagement and Access

Family engagement - Families access hubs when services are welcoming, accessible and culturally competent.
Effective outreach- Targeted outreach reaches families experiencing poverty, isolation or housing difficulties.
Digital access – Families can use digital resources where required.

Programme Delivery

Adequate and sustained funding and workforce capacity across the partnership.
Continuity – Families receive warm handovers and consistent multi-agency follow-up.
Fit-for-purpose sites – Hub sites remain accessible and located where need is highest.
Evidence-based design – Interventions selected from national BSIL/HLE/Parenting menus meet local needs.

Equity and Inclusion

Anti-racism - Services act on disproportionalities
Accessibility- Support is accessible for SEND families, EAL households, care-experienced, young parents and those in insecure housing.
Hubs provide a safe, welcoming environment

6. Our Needs Assessment

Our Needs Assessment details the local needs of babies, children and families across our early years system, and plans to address these needs and gaps in provision by strategically targeting programmes and funding and making the best use of local assets and expertise.

6.1 What parents and carers are telling us?

During the Family Hubs Listening events in 2023, we engaged 43 parents, 19 families of children with SEND, 21 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations.

Key messages from the listening events which have informed the Best Start in Life Plan:

- Parents told us they would like weekend and holiday activities at our family hubs and group and parenting support classes.
- VCS organisations highlighted as a key priority accessible services and improved Family Information Service.
- Partners in Education and Health suggested as a priority the need to change language and narrative and the need to co-produce services with partners and residents.

Accessible communication to partners and families and co-production of services are overarching themes in this Plan and have been addressed in each priority.

Direct Feedback from parents:

- *“Please can all the colleges talk to parents using Family Hubs about courses, and future careers? Once our children are two, we have time to study or work.”*
- *“Is it possible to centralise all the children/toddler/ baby offerings in one place so that parents can easily know what’s going on?”*

Based on parent and carer feedback, we have created a dedicated priority for our parenting support offer. Priority 3 commits to delivering evidence-based, accessible support that is tailored to local need and co-designed with parents. The co-design element of this priority will focus on improving engagement, accessibility and wraparound support. Through this work, we will strengthen parenting capacity, widen access for working parents, fathers and families with SEND and ensure consistent, evidence-based delivery across Family Hubs and partners.

6.2 National Context Evidence Base

The [Local Government Association](#) (LGA) and the Leaders Council established a national taskforce to tackle Best Start in Life delivery challenges and develop practical solutions. Interface Enterprises conducted research across 60 local areas, drawing on literature, case studies, multi-agency workshops, and parent engagement. The evidence from LGA *“Achieving the Best Start in Life: Research to Support a Plan for Partners”* highlights interconnected structural barriers affecting early development, including:

- Deprivation and poverty, strongly linked to lower GLD outcomes.
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), increasing developmental and behavioural challenges.
- Limited access to high-quality early years provision, particularly for disadvantaged children and those with SEND.

- Workforce shortages across early years and health visiting.
- Challenges with early identification and data sharing.

We are responding to these challenges through our eight priorities and the following enablers:

- *Improved data use to identify gaps in access and target resources.*
- *Strong multi-agency leadership across Health, Education and Family Support.*
- *Early intervention, using Healthy Child Programme (HCP) checks and targeted support for attachment, speech and language and SEND.*
- *Workforce development through multi-agency learning and peer support.*
- *Deep community and parent engagement, working with universal services, VCS partners and families.*

6.3 What is our data telling us?

Understanding the Needs of Children and Families in Wandsworth

To develop the Best Start in Life Plan, we carried out a detailed needs analysis to understand the experiences of children growing up in Wandsworth. This analysis brings together a wide range of information, including the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), Public Health Fingertips indicators, Housing data and Children’s Services performance. Looking at these data sources together gave us a well-rounded picture of how children are developing, what support families are receiving, and where further help may be needed.

Our analysis shows that while many children in Wandsworth are doing well, some groups face greater barriers in reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of Reception. **These groups include disadvantaged children, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, boys and children from global majority communities.** These differences in outcomes tell us that some children may not be getting the right support early enough, and that further work is required to reduce inequalities. Understanding these gaps has helped us set clear priorities for the Best Start in Life Plan and to design approaches and delivery that are targeted, practical and capable of **improving outcomes for the children who need it most.**

A Place-Based Approach to Getting Support Right

Our needs analysis takes a strong place-based approach as recommended by the LGA. This means looking not only at which children need support, but also at where they live and whether the right services are available within their neighbourhoods (see the map on page 17). Families’ experiences differ across the borough, and some areas face higher levels of disadvantage or have fewer local assets. By analysing patterns at neighbourhood level, we can ensure that **services are located where they will have the greatest impact and that families can access help at the right time, in the right place, and in the right way.** For this reason, strengthening community outreach have been identified as a priority for the Best Start in Life Plan (see Priority 5).

A central part of this work is our commitment to anti-racist practice. We recognise that racism can limit children’s opportunities and impact their wellbeing. Our needs analysis therefore examines disparities between groups and supports actions that actively challenge inequality. We are committed to ensuring that every child in Wandsworth is able to flourish, feel included and thrive,

regardless of their background, heritage or circumstances. Priority 6 in our Plan focuses on narrowing inequalities.

Communication and Literacy

One of the most important findings from the needs analysis relates to children's early communication and literacy skills. Data from the Health Visiting service, including assessments at the 2–2½ year review, as well as early learning goals data from the EYFSP, show that communication and language needs are a common area where children require additional support. These early gaps, if not addressed, can affect a child's wider development, confidence and readiness for school.

For this reason, communication and literacy have been identified as a priority for the Best Start in Life Plan (see Priority 4). This includes understanding the specific factors that contribute to early language delays, identifying which groups of children are most affected, and exploring what works to support children's speech, language and communication development. By focusing on these areas, we can help ensure that children receive the right support early, through families receiving guidance on home learning, through high-quality early years provision, and through targeted interventions delivered by Family Hubs, early years settings, health professionals and schools.

Strengthening communication and literacy in the early years will help reduce inequalities, support school readiness and give every child the strongest possible foundation for lifelong learning.

Family Hubs and Beyond Outcomes Framework

Wandsworth has played a leading role in shaping the Family Hubs and Beyond (FHAB) outcomes framework as part of the London Community of Practice, which is aligned with the Government's Local Outcomes Framework (LOF). By actively engaging in working groups, Wandsworth helped review indicators, assess data availability and ensure that the framework is practical for both strategic planning and frontline Family Hub work (see Appendix 1 for the detailed outcomes framework). Our feedback was instrumental in refining FHAB to align with the national Best Start in Life ambitions while remaining adaptable to local early help arrangements.

A key contribution from Wandsworth is the development of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Map, which bridges borough-wide data with the real-life experiences of families. This tool identifies communities where adversity, such as domestic abuse, parental mental health challenges, poverty, or housing instability is most concentrated. The ACE Map has shaped FHAB's focus on connecting data at individual, neighbourhood and borough levels, enabling more targeted and preventative Family Hub support for families across Wandsworth. The ACE mapping will be instrumental in delivery our Community Outreach strategy (see Priority 4).

The needs analysis on the next page demonstrates Wandsworth GLD performance and other relevant outcomes across the three clusters.

Wandsworth Best Start in Life Needs Analysis - Wandsworth Population Overview



Population

There are 58,730 children aged 0-17 in Wandsworth (17% of the population) and 29,146 young people aged 18 – 24 (7% of the population)

Ethnicity breakdown of the local population

Wandsworth is recognised for being highly diverse. Based on the **2021 Census**, among children aged 5–17:

- **39%** are White British
- **16%** are Black (including **9% Black African** and **3% Black Caribbean**)
- **14%** are Asian (including **7% Pakistani** and **2% Indian**)
- **14%** are from Mixed ethnic backgrounds
- **12%** are from any other White background

While these figures are from 2021, the borough has continued to experience rapid demographic change, suggesting that diversity is likely to have increased further since then.



Education Health and Care Plans

In Wandsworth the number of children with an Education Health and Care Plan as at January 2025 was 3,175 (which is an increase of 11% higher than January 2023).



Child Poverty

In 2023/24, **6,547 children (12.3%)** under 16 are living in absolute low-income households and **7,574 children (14.4%)** under 16 are living in relative low-income households. According to London Poverty Profile measures, 14% of children are in poverty before housing costs and 33% are in poverty after housing costs.

In Wandsworth, in 2023 (latest available data), there were an estimated 46,600 children in working households (where both parents work), 16,200 children in mixed households (where one person works). There were 4,300 children in workless households, of whom 3,100 lived in single parent households.



Free school meals

31% of children are eligible for free school meals.



Housing

In Q1 2025–26, there were 2,064 households with children in temporary accommodation. This figure is broadly in line with other inner London boroughs.



Education

- **73%** reach a Good Level of Development (England average: 68%)
- At Key Stage 2, **69%** of pupils meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (England average: 62%).
- At Key Stage 4, the average Attainment 8 score is **51.8**, (England average: 46.0).



Health

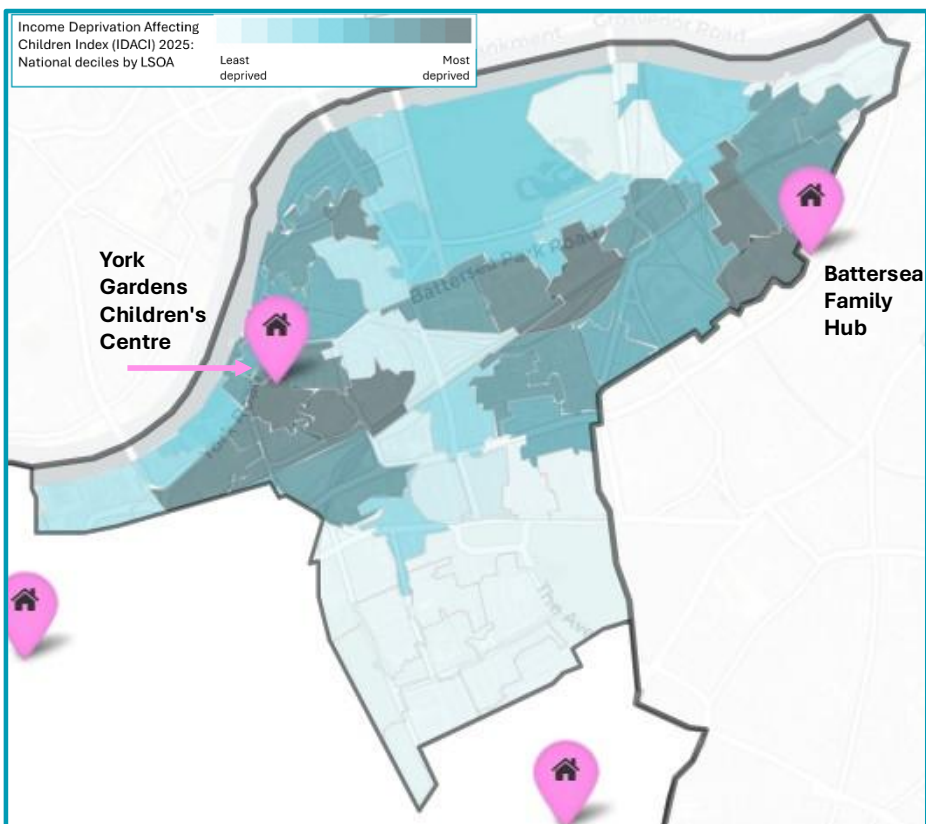
- **69.9%** of children received a 2 to 2 and a half year review.
- **68%** of children achieved the expected level in communication at 2 to 2 and a half years.
- **18.8%** of children in reception are overweight.
- **24.4%** of 5-year-olds have visually obvious dental decay.
- Coverage of the MMR 2 vaccine is only **73.8%**



Children's Social Care

- Child in Need rate: **284 per 10,000**, below the national average of 330.
- Child Protection Plan rate: **14 per 10,000**, substantially below the national rate of 41.
- Children Looked After rate: **41 per 10,000**, also lower than the national figure of 67.

Wandsworth Best Start in Life Needs Analysis - Battersea



Battersea has the smallest population of children aged 0–17 (14,697), yet it has the highest proportion of families on relative low incomes (16%, compared with the Wandsworth average of 14%). Although average house prices are the highest in the borough, the area benefits from a large working-age population and the best public transport accessibility in Wandsworth.



75% Reaching a Good Level of Development in 2025
Wandsworth average 73%

A smaller proportion of children in Battersea access funded childcare than the rest of the borough, but there is strong engagement with Family Hubs



24% 2-year-olds accessing childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 27%

60% 3-4-year-olds accessing universal 15 hours childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 64%

11% 3-4-year-olds accessing 30 hour extended childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 16%



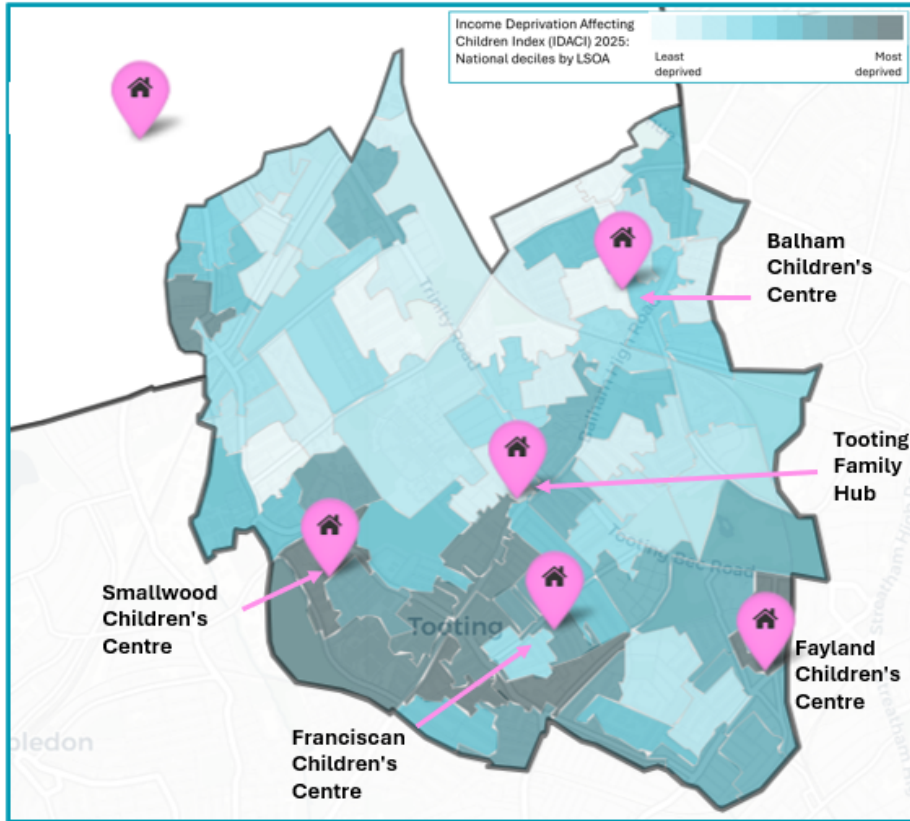
66% Children under 5 registered with a Family Hub
Wandsworth average 62%

19% Children under 5 accessing Family Hub services
Wandsworth average 19%



Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI 2025)
 A change from 11 areas in 2019 to 10 areas in 2025 that are amongst the 0-20% most deprived areas nationally (deciles 1-2).

Wandsworth Best Start in Life Needs Analysis - Tooting



Although Tooting has a relatively large population of children aged 0–17 (18,592), it has the lowest proportion of families on relative low incomes (12%, compared with the Wandsworth average of 14%). A high proportion of children benefit from excellent access to natural spaces, and a high proportion of adults in the area work full time.



74% Reaching a Good Level of Development in 2025
Wandsworth average 73%

Tooting has the highest proportion of children accessing funded childcare in Wandsworth. It also has the highest engagement rate with Family Hub services.



29% 2-year-olds accessing childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 27%

66% 3-4-year-olds accessing universal 15 hours childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 64%

18% 3-4-year-olds accessing 30 hour extended childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 16%



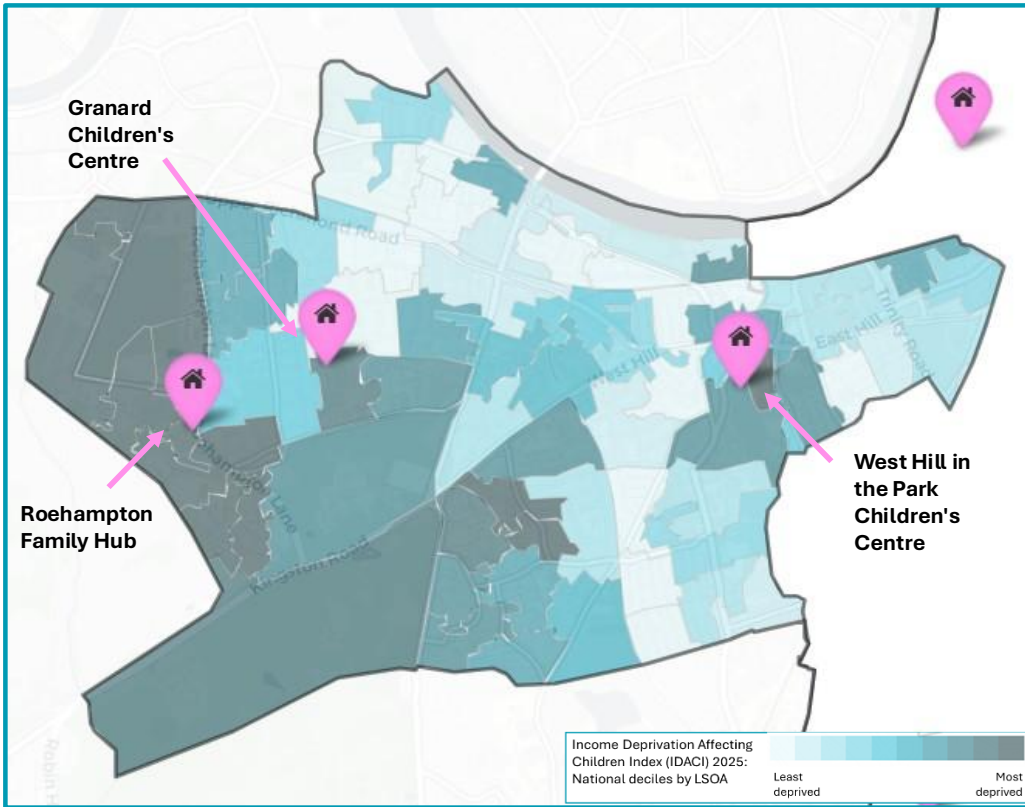
64% Children under 5 registered with a Family Hub
Wandsworth average 62%

20% Children under 5 accessing Family Hub services
Wandsworth average 19%



Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI 2025)
 A change from 5 areas in 2019 to 10 areas in 2025 that are amongst the 0-20% most deprived areas nationally (deciles 1-2).

Wandsworth Best Start in Life Needs Analysis - Roehampton



Roehampton has the largest population of children aged 0–17 in the borough (19,948). The area also has a slightly higher proportion of families on relative low incomes (15%, compared with the Wandsworth average of 14%). Public transport links are limited, and the proportion of working-age adults is marginally lower than in the rest of Wandsworth.



71% Reaching a Good Level of Development in 2025
Wandsworth average 73%

A higher proportion of children access funded childcare in Roehampton, and although registration levels with a Family Hub are lowest here, there is strong engagement from families who are registered.



28% 2-year-olds accessing childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 27%

66% 3-4-year-olds accessing universal 15 hours childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 64%

17% 3-4-year-olds accessing 30 hour extended childcare (summer 2025)
Wandsworth average 16%



59% Children under 5 registered with a Family Hub
Wandsworth average 62%

19% Children under 5 accessing Family Hub services
Wandsworth average 19%



Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI 2025)
 A change from 10 areas in 2019 to 13 areas in 2025 that are amongst the 0-20% most deprived areas nationally (deciles 1-2).

Proportion of children at the end of Reception reaching each of the 12 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) - 2025

Reception Outcomes: How Wandsworth compares to London and England

The chart shows how children in Wandsworth perform at the end of Reception across all 12 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Overall, Although Wandsworth performs well overall and is ahead of London and England in every individual area, some differences are very small. This means there is still room for improvement in the following areas:

Communication and language

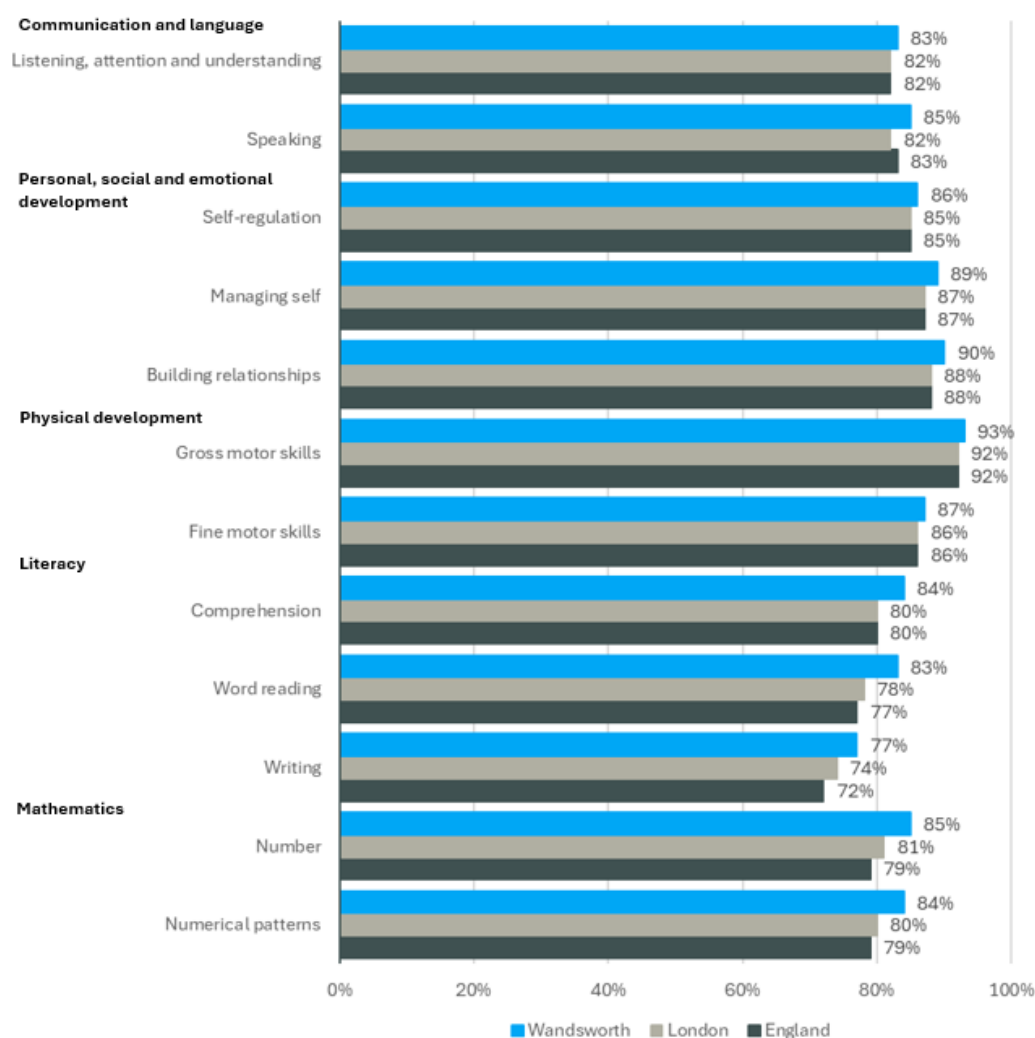
- Wandsworth is only 1 percentage point above London and England in listening, attention and understanding.
- A small margin suggests that some children may still need support with attention and understanding.

Literacy

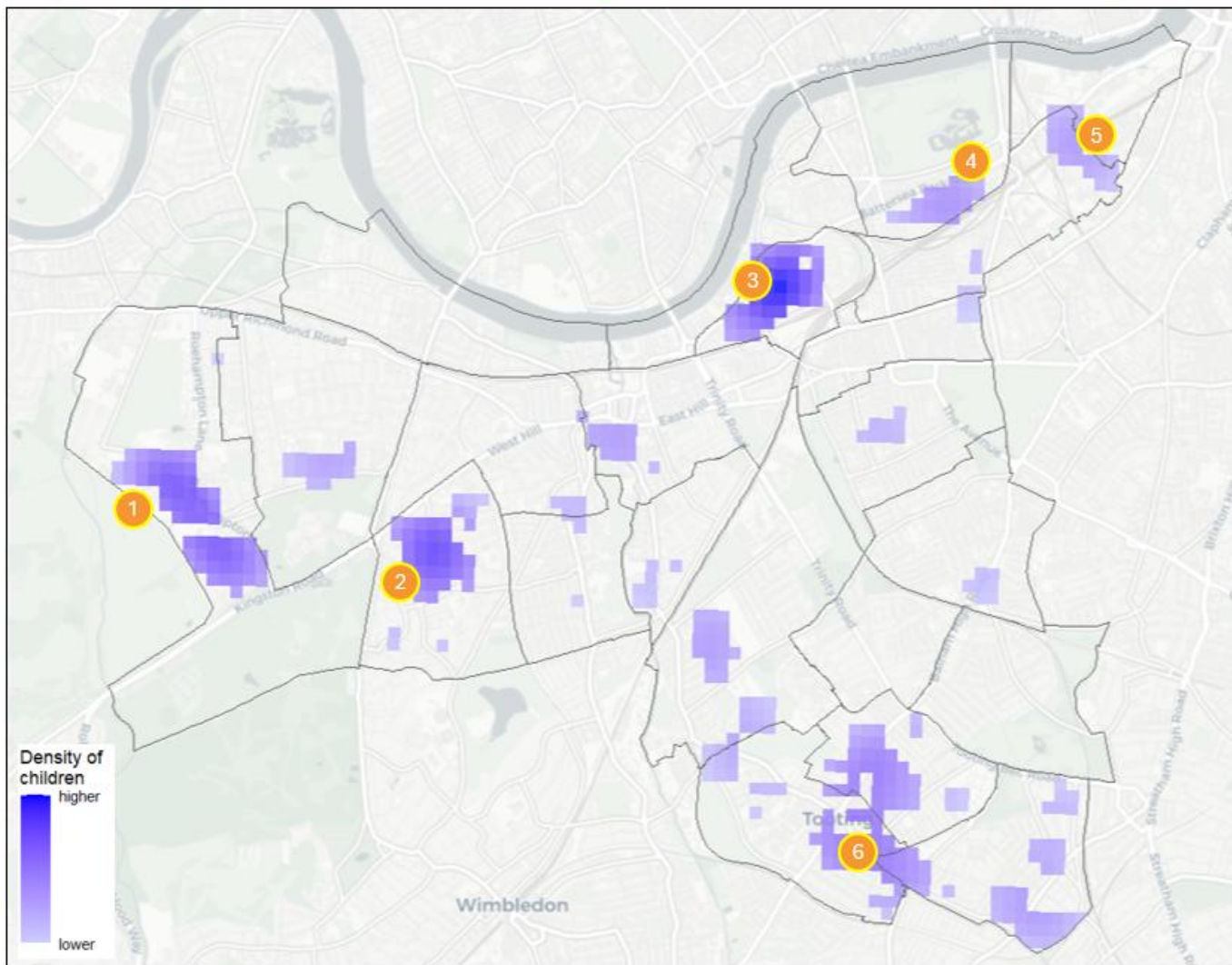
- Although Wandsworth is ahead of London and England, writing remains the lowest-scoring literacy area locally (77%).
- It is improving, but still a development area compared with stronger reading and comprehension results.

Physical development – fine motor skills

- The improvement above London and England is modest (87% vs 86%).
- This may suggest a need to strengthen early mark-making, scissor skills, and hand strength for writing.



Hotspot analysis of children not reaching a Good Level of Development by the end of reception (2023/24 and 2024/25)



What this map shows

- Blue hotspots on the Wandsworth map show areas where more children are **not reaching a Good Level of Development by the end of reception**. Many of these hotspots overlap with neighbourhoods that have high levels of childhood poverty. This link suggests that children growing up in poorer households may face challenges such as limited access to early learning resources, less stable housing, and fewer opportunities for enrichment. These factors can make it harder for them to develop the skills needed for a strong start in school.

(This map is commensurate with the DWP 2-year-old map)

Hotspot Areas

1. Around **Alton Estate** in Roehampton.
2. Estates in central **West Hill**, including **Southmead**
3. Around **Winstanley** and **Kambala Estates** in Falconbrook
4. Around **Doddington** and **Rollo Estates** near Battersea Park
5. Around **Patmore Estate** in Shaftsbury and Queenstown.
6. Areas surrounding **Tooting Broadway**, **Tooting Bec**, and **Furzedown**

Mapping areas with **higher-than-expected** numbers of children using Kernel Density Estimation (KDE)

At present, tracking of children’s development from pre-birth through the early years is limited, so **Priority 1** focuses on working with partners to develop joint data-sharing protocols, quarterly dashboards and an outcomes framework to drive improvements in Early Learning Goals and Good Level of Development outcomes.

Priority 4 focuses on improving early communication and language by establishing a shared, multi-agency communication pathway, strengthening early identification, coordinated referrals, high-quality early intervention and a skilled workforce so that children receive timely, consistent support across health, Family Hubs, early years settings and SEND services.

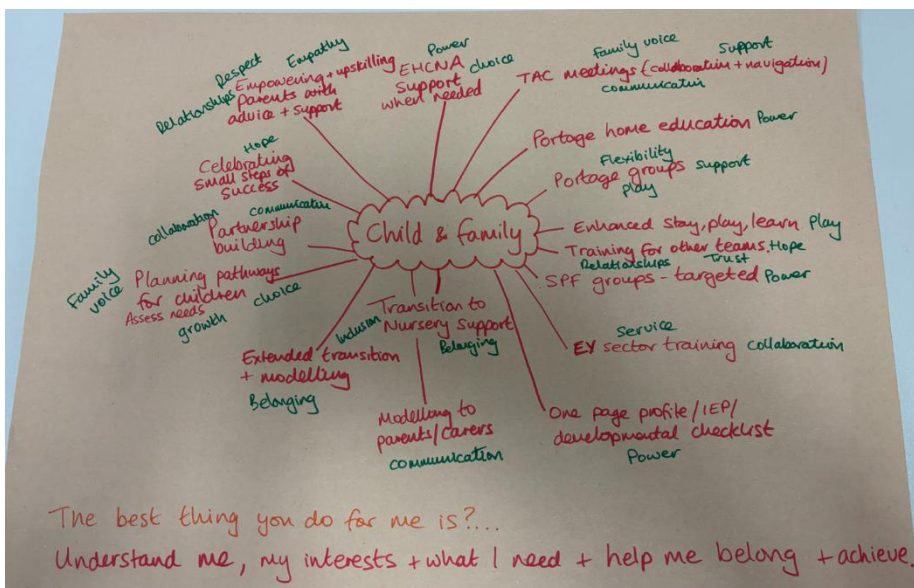
Disadvantage, particularly among children eligible for FSM and the consistent underachievement of boys underpin our next priorities. **Priority 5** focuses on targeted community outreach, using local intelligence and spatial analysis to proactively reach families, strengthen early engagement and connect those with the greatest need to Family Hub, health and early years services.

Priority 6 focuses on narrowing inequalities and addressing disproportionality, especially for boys and global majority children, through strengthened multi-agency working, culturally competent practice and data-led delivery. The aim is to improve early development, health indicators and engagement for families facing the greatest barriers.

6.4 Insights from delivery

Our Early Help, Early Years and Special Needs and Disabilities staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the children they support and are committed to achieving the positive outcomes outlined in our logic model.

Staff feedback highlighted that our Best Start in Life Plan should prioritise early identification and personalised, relationship-based support that places the child and family at the centre.



They also emphasised the importance of strong multi-agency collaboration, consistent practice and creating a sense of belonging and community for families (see feedback from staff at a recent staff workshop led by the Inclusion Service).

Children in Wandsworth are able to access and benefit from a **high quality and inclusive education regardless of the early years setting**, with 99% of our early years’ providers judged good or outstanding. Children with Special Educational Needs are being identified and supported in a timely

manner with support from our Enhanced Stay Play and Learn Group. Residents eligible for Access for All benefit from the expansion of our pioneering Baby Box scheme, a scheme unique to Wandsworth and the first of its kind in London. Receiving the Baby Box was described as *“like something from a family member”*. You can read about the impact of baby boxes on **Page 19**.

Our Family Hubs parent/carer online workshops attract around 20 families each session, with a peak of 96 bookings for “Enjoying time with your child” by the Educational Psychology team. Parent feedback indicates they gain valuable insights that improve their parenting and support their child’s development. Our Fantastic Twos offer was recognised as good practice by LGA early years.

Practice Spotlight Fantastic 2s: Engaging Eligible Families in Early Education

Click [here](#) to see the practice spotlight

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library: Giving children the best start through books is just one of the reasons why Wandsworth is the best place for a child to grow up.

Click [here](#) to see the video



Case Study: Teenage parents referred via the Family Nurse Partnership

A teenage couple had limited experience with baby development, safety routines and navigating health appointments. The practitioner supported them through a Baby Box, modelling how to use sensory materials, books and the tummy-time mat to support Baby L’s early learning and bonding. Relational trust was central. The practitioner accompanied the family into health-visiting clinic sessions when they felt anxious, helping them attend weight checks and immunisations regularly. Alongside developmental support, the practitioner provided holistic, practical help, including food bank referrals, Little Village support, and assistance in reinstating a Personal Independence Payment. Over time, the parents became more confident, began attending Baby Group sessions and experienced a growing sense of connection and capability. Baby L now benefits from richer play, sensory interaction, and improved access to health services within a more stable caregiving environment.

Beyond the practical supports, the relationship itself became a key protective factor for the family. The practitioner’s warm, non-judgemental approach helped parents M and J feel seen and valued at a time when they were unsure of themselves as new parents. This trust opened the door to wider Early Help pathways, such as developmental referrals, Baby Group participation, and access to food, energy, and financial advice.



The Baby Box acted not just as a resource, but as an invitation into a network of care that strengthened the family's wellbeing and sense of belonging.

8. Next Steps

We will ensure alignment with the Families First Partnership Programme, Local Area SEND Reform, and other locality-based reforms such as Integrated Neighbour Health by establishing an overarching governance structure, a dedicated Transformation Board. This will enable us to maintain alignment across programmes, provide consistent strategic direction, and ensure that the Best Start in Life Local Partnership effectively responds to interdependencies, risks and opportunities.

The main governance mechanism for delivering the strategic plan will be the Best Start in Life Project Board, a strategic forum comprising key delivery partners. These include Public Health, Early Years, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Social Care, commissioned providers, as well as Community and Voluntary Sector organisations. Delivery of our aspirational plan is enabled through the co-ordination of partnership resources which has been reflected in our Logic Model.

A Performance Management Framework for Best Start in Life will support our priority objectives by tracking progress toward outcomes and guiding intervention and activity planning. For example, a quarterly dashboard will publish performance data, highlighting progress toward our eight priorities, as well as deep dives of intelligence to investigate facilitators and barriers to progress. Priority outcomes will be embedded through partnership contracts and service level agreements. Effective communications and co-production strategies will be developed, with a feedback loop for all engagement and participation activities.

Appendix 1: Family Hubs common outcomes framework as at end March 2025

Babies, children and young people – March 2025

	Safe	Healthy	Happy	Learning	Engaged
Outcomes	<p>All babies, children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are protected from harm, threats and the impact of adversity, including experiencing domestic abuse • Are and feel physically and emotionally safe at home, at school and in their communities • Have secure, stable, loving homes 	<p>All babies, children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are physically healthy and make positive health choices • Are protected from preventable disease 	<p>All babies, children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have their emotional, social and personal needs met • Are supported to build resilience • Enjoy play, recreation, sport, arts, culture and nature 	<p>All babies, children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are learning and developing from birth • Have a supportive home learning environment • Are gaining the knowledge and skills they need for later childhood and adult life • Are motivated, ready to learn and aspire for their future 	<p>All babies, children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are happy with family life, family networks, friendships and connections • Have a choice of things to do and places to go • Feel valued and respected and that they belong to a community • Have their voices heard and acted upon
Indicators	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of safety • Accidental and non -accidental injury • Abuse, maltreatment or neglect in the household • Experience of domestic abuse • Children experiencing poverty • Children at risk or experiencing harm outside their home • Children at risk or involved in crime / anti-social behaviour 	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical healthy and free from preventable diseases • Birth outcomes • Healthy weight and lifestyles – healthy eating and regular exercise • Oral health • Young people's use of drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping 	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive emotional health and wellbeing • Resilience, confidence and emotional regulation • Infant/child -parent interaction, attachment and emotional connection 	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive engagement in learning and development opportunities, at home and at school • Early cognitive, personal, social and emotional development • Development of numeracy, literacy and language skills • Accessing ongoing education and training - building skills, interests and aspirations • Pathways to economic participation and independent living 	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships and feelings of connection at home, at school and in their communities, with conflict resolved constructively • Children and young people with specific needs (supported to) engage in appropriate (and fun) activities • Children and young people involved in needs assessment, service design/co -design/co -production, review etc
Metrics	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number reporting feeling safe at home, school and in their community • Number of A&E attendances and hospital admissions • Number open to Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection Plans • Number experiencing domestic abuse • Number living in poverty • Number at risk or experiencing harm outside their home • Number missing from home/care • Number of young people involved in crime/anti -social behaviour 	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number with/reporting good physical health and wellbeing • Numbers with healthy birth weight and gestational age within normal range • Number of children categorised as healthy weight (at reception and year 6 - and beyond) • Number (of all ages) engaging in regular exercise and with access to healthy food • Absence of visible dental caries • Number young people reporting making healthy choices – including relating to alcohol, smoking, vaping, cannabis 	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number with/reporting positive emotional health and wellbeing - including confidence, resilience and enjoying available play, sport, recreation and enrichment opportunities • Number with good quality infant/child -parent interaction, attachment and emotional connection 	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers engaging positively in learning and development opportunities • Numbers reaching early development milestones; with the skills needed to be ready to start Reception; numbers achieving Good Level of Development at end of Reception year • Numbers with good school attendance; without primary and secondary school suspensions and permanent exclusions • Numbers of young people in education, employment, training (EET) 	<p><i>For those accessing family hubs' services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number with/reporting positive, caring relationships family, peers and significant adults • Absence of harmful parental conflict • Number with/reporting positive opportunities for play, sport, recreation and enrichment • Number with/reporting access to resources and spaces • Number reporting feeling valued, respected and listened to

Parents and carers – March 2025

	Safe	Healthy	Happy	Learning	Engaged
Outcomes	Parents (are supported to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect their children from harm and the impacts of adversity Provide a safe and secure family home Overcome the impact of domestic abuse 	Parents (are supported to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make positive health choices for themselves and their child(ren) 	Parents (are supported to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have their mental health and emotional wellbeing needs met Build strong parent-infant attachments 	Parents (are supported to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet their child’s early and ongoing development and learning needs 	Parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are happy with family and wider relationships Engage with and use the services and support they need Are engaged in service design and review
Indicators	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact with family hub and children’s social care services Experience of domestic abuse Adverse housing and financial circumstances 	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents’ physical health, healthy lifestyles and positive health choices – for themselves and their children Access to checks and services Immunisation Breastfeeding 	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental mental health and emotional wellbeing Perinatal mental health Parent-infant/child attachment and emotional connection Parents who feel confident and supported (including in their transitions to new parenthood) 	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents create a nurturing and stimulating home learning environment Access to high quality early education and childcare 	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive parenting and family relationships with conflict resolved constructively Spending quality time together Have/build connections and feel part of a community Parents participating in needs assessment, service design/co-design/co-production, review/evaluation
Metrics	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers accessing family hub services and with children open to Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection Plans Number affected by domestic abuse Number living in suitable, safe and secure homes - free from the risk of eviction/homelessness Number with an adult in the family who is workless 	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers attending antenatal and postnatal appointments and development checks Numbers starting and sustaining breastfeeding Uptake of immunisation - number of babies, children and young people with up -to-date immunisations Numbers who accessed a (NHS) dentist within last 12 months Numbers reporting making healthy choices, including regular exercise, healthy food choices, reduction in alcohol/substance use 	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number parents with/reporting positive emotional health and wellbeing including during perinatal period Number with good quality parent-infant/child attachment and emotional connection Number of parents who report feeling confident and supported (including in the transition to new parenthood) 	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of parents with/reporting the skills, knowledge and confidence to support their child(ren)’s development, learning and aspirations Numbers accessing free early education and childcare entitlement 	<i>For those accessing family hubs’ services:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number accessing core services, including (specialist) parenting support in places and ways that work for them Number of parents with/reporting positive relationships with family and peers Reported parents’/family access to resources and spaces Number of parents reporting trust and confidence in the workforce Number reporting feeling valued, respected and listened to