

**BEST
START
IN LIFE**



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



Wokingham's Best Start in Life Strategy 2026 – 2028



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Introduction

Our Goal is to grow the village for families in Wokingham



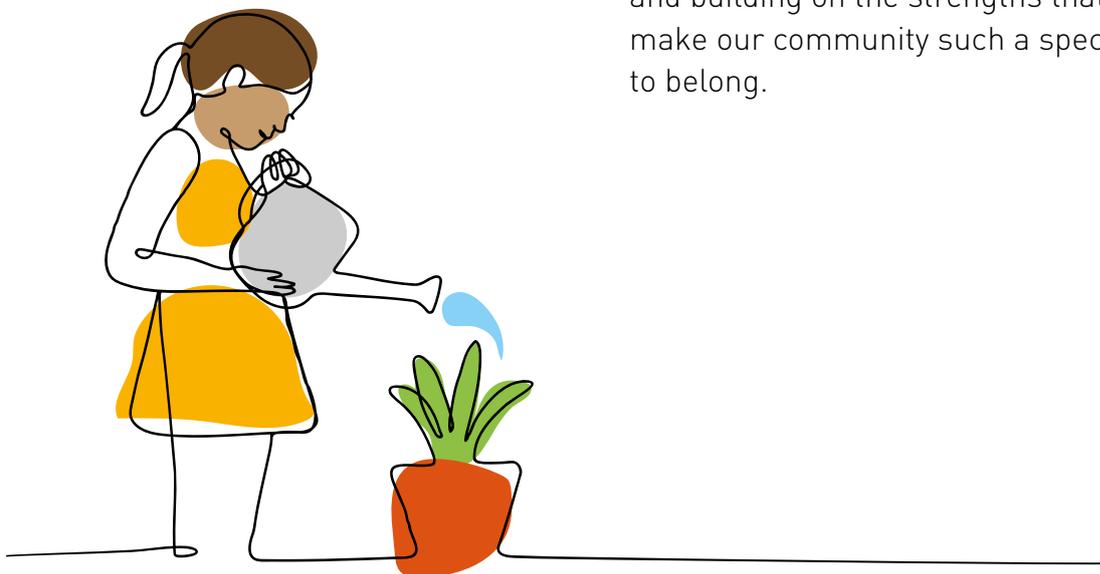
The care we show one another, the roles we play in each other's lives, and even the environments we share all shape how we grow, how we feel and how we connect with others.

One of the most important factors that helps children and families to thrive is a sense of belonging - knowing we are supported, connected, and valued by those around us. Each of us has a part to play in this: as parents, carers, grandparents, extended family, neighbours, volunteers, friends, and as professionals working alongside families.

Here in Wokingham, our goal for our early years is simple: to grow the village around families.

We believe this will support our mission to reduce inequalities for families in Wokingham, giving every child the best possible start in life - supporting good levels of development, building-in strong protective factors in the face of challenges, and laying the foundation for better health and employment outcomes in the long term.

To do this, we are creating new ways of welcoming and supporting families - making sure no one is left behind, while celebrating and building on the strengths that already make our community such a special place to belong.



How the Whole System promotes positive outcomes in early childhood

Here are some of the local services that support children in their early years (from pre-birth up until 5 years old):

Local Employer

I can provide **flexible work**, so this baby's parents can earn money and spend quality time with them.

Midwife

I helped this little child's mum stay **happy and healthy in pregnancy**, and to have a **safe birth**, so that they had the best possible environment and experiences at the start of life.

Early Help Practitioner in the Family Hub

I can work with this child and their family to **understand their needs and goals**, and to help them to access the support that is available in their area.

Family Hub Workers

I can meet the family locally and help them to **access local services** for the first time, and make connections to activities and support.

GP

I can help this child's parents to get the support they need from local services that can **support their mental health**.

Baby and Toddler Group Volunteer

I can provide this child and their parents a **safe space** where they can play and enjoy quality time together.

Health Visitor

I can help this family with a range of **social, emotional and physical health issues**.

Early Years Provider

I can support a child's **cognitive, emotional and social development** through play, reading and exploration.

Social Worker

I met this family during their pregnancy because they have a history of adversity and had a previous child removed. I have helped them to get the support they need to ensure this child is **safe and nurtured**.

Early Years SENCO

I can provide extra support when this child is struggling with behaviour or emotions, and development. **Helping them to manage their feelings**.

Parent-infant Psychologist

I can support this baby and their parents, to **strengthen their early relationship** so the child gets the nurturing care they need.

Local Advice Service Volunteer

I can help the child's parents access the **benefits and childcare support** they are entitled to.

Library Service

I can support this **child and family with inclusive rhyme times**, a book start scheme and linking them with what's on in the area.

Virtual School

I can support this child in care and their carers and parents with learning through play. I provide termly education meetings with nurseries to **discuss developmental stages and identify any gaps in learning**.

Local Charity Support

We can give this family **warm clothes, books and toys** so that this child is comfortable and has things to play with at home.



In Wokingham we have various services that can be part of working together to support children to thrive in their early years, with their families:





Best Start in Life strategy as part of a bigger story

There are a number of local initiatives that are paving the way for more early support, community, relational approaches for families, that work towards our goal:

Our Community Vision and Council Plan

Together with community groups, charities, and residents we have set out our Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-2030 which signifies our commitment to foster a thriving, inclusive, and healthy community, so that everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Our six Community Vision ambitions are:



Ambition 1
Protecting and improving our places



Ambition 2
Making it easy for people to access the things they want and need



Ambition 3
Building and maintaining great communities



Ambition 4
Providing fair opportunities for everyone



Ambition 5
Economic success that everyone is part of



Ambition 6
Living happy, healthy and independent lives

Our Helping Early Strategy 2025 - 2028

We have agreed a relational approach in our shared Helping Early Strategy 2025 - 2028 in supporting families early. This will be done through focussing on the **access** to early support, the **experience** of families when seeking and receiving help, and also in improving the **way we work together** as a system.

Addressing Health Inequalities in Wokingham

We are committed to achieving the best outcomes for all residents by addressing inequalities. With help from the Institute of Health Equity, Wokingham Borough Council has become a 'Marmot Borough'. This means we recognise that health inequalities are mostly shaped by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live and work and age. These are building blocks of our health and wellbeing. It also means we are using local insights and lived experiences to reshape the way we support everyone, particularly those most in need.

Health & Wellbeing Plan

Best Start in Life is a priority in our Health & Wellbeing Plan, providing clear delivery and accountability for Early Years services in Wokingham.



Our Primary Care Strategy

Our Primary Care Strategy, which is shared with Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, sets out a plan to provide more preventative, integrated and community support for the population. This will provide more opportunities for integrated working between children's services and primary care.

The three priorities of the strategy, are:

1. People get to the right support first time to meet their needs.
 2. Joined up, personalised, proactive care for people with multimorbidity and complex needs.
 3. Support to help people stay well, prevent ill health and minimise the impact of poor health.
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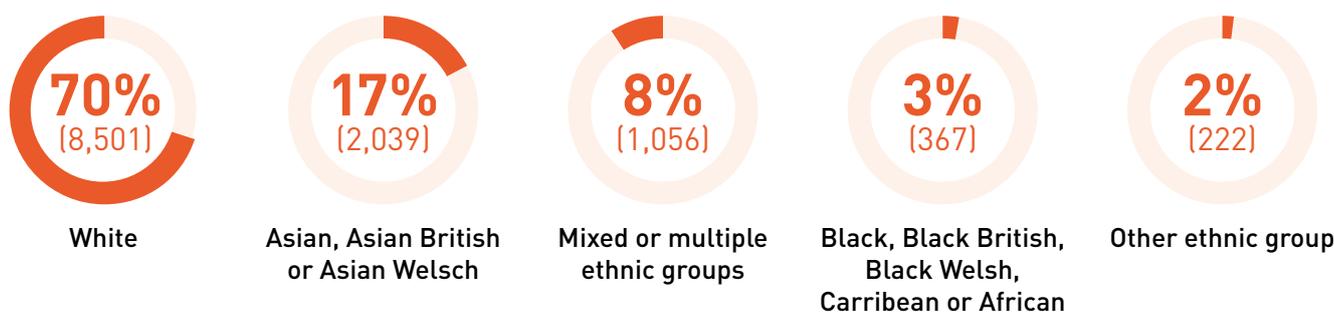
Evidence and insight for Early Years in Wokingham

Below paints some of the picture of Early Years in Wokingham, highlighting **strengths, inequalities, and shifts in population and family experience** – all of which have shaped this strategy. A joint strategic needs assessment for Children is underway and will be available via the [Berkshire Observatory](#).

Population

Wokingham is home to 12,185 children up to the age of 5 (Census, 2021). There were 1,726 new births in Wokingham in 2024 (Office for National Statistics) with 904 males and 822 females.

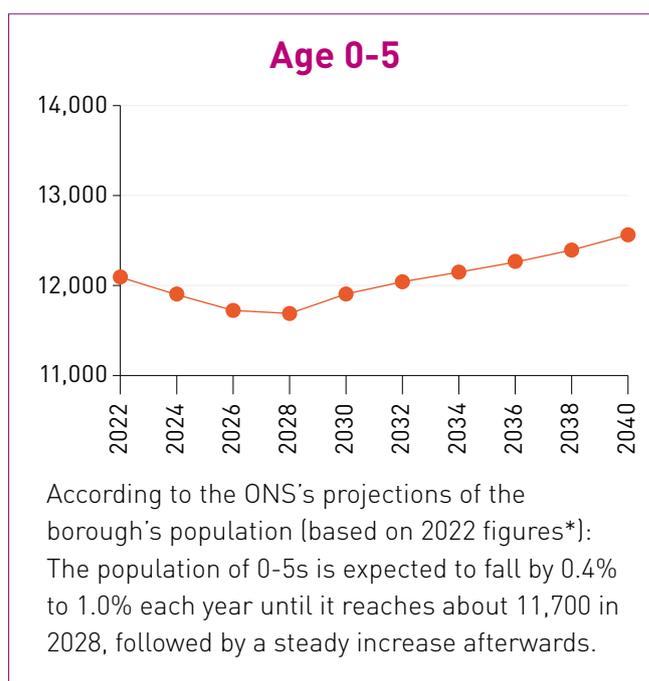
0-5 population by ethnic group:



Under 18s conception in Wokingham is 5.5 per 1,000 women (Fingertips, 2023), this continues to be a decrease on previous years, however we are conscious of the current national gradual rise in under 18s conception.

As part of this strategy’s development, Nursery Providers highlighted the need for greater support for families where English is an additional language, to help remove barriers to access and engagement with early years education and support services.

According to the ONS population projections for the borough (based on 2022 figures), the number of 0–5-year-olds is forecast to **decline by 0.4% to 1.0% per year**, reaching around **11,700 by 2028**, before beginning a gradual increase thereafter.







Early childcare and education

Wokingham Borough ranks among the top five local authorities nationally for access to high-quality childcare (Ofsted Annual Report 2023/24).

As of August 2025, the borough has:



136

Registered childminders



66

Group providers



22

Nursery classes attached to schools



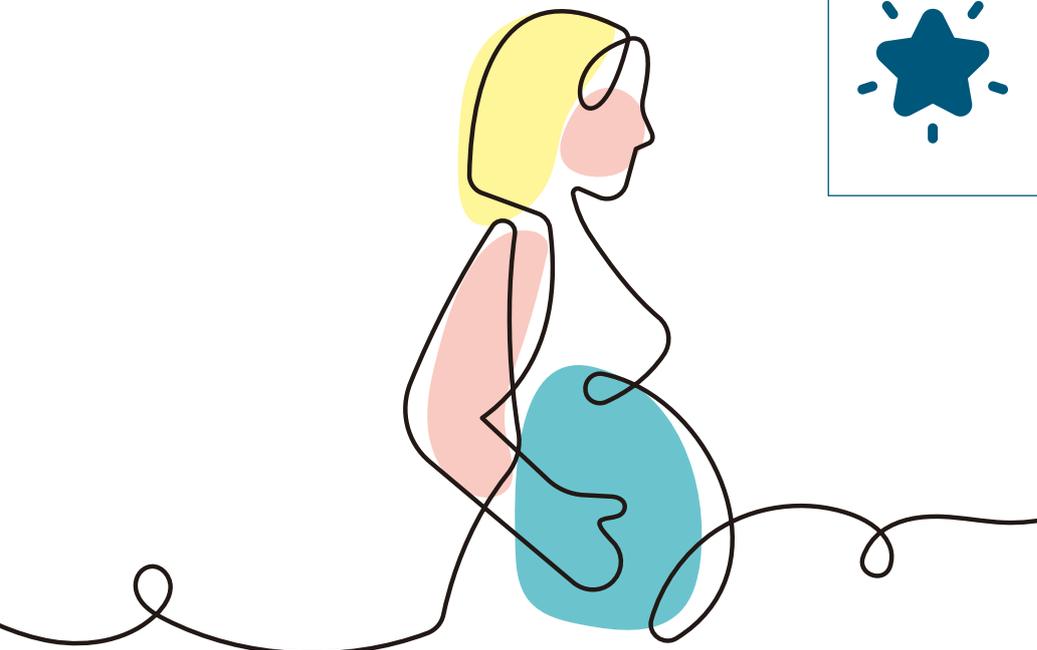
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Maintained nursery school



99%

Rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted





Research shows that access to early childcare and joined-up services can significantly improve outcomes, with children living near centres providing joined-up support, on average, **three higher GCSE grades**, particularly benefiting those eligible for free school meals (Institute of Fiscal Studies Report).

Despite this, take-up of the **Supported Two-Year-Old Entitlement** remains low: as of August 2025, **84 of 164 eligible families (50.9%) were not accessing the funding**, even after accounting for an estimated 12 families who moved out of the borough. This take-up rate is below the **national average of 65%**.

In line with neighbouring boroughs and national research, Wokingham is working to ensure every eligible family is aware of, understands, and can access the entitlement - requiring **consistent support across the Early Years system**.

Parent involvement and participation

Parent Volunteers have been a core part of our voluntary sector and community groups in Wokingham, such as Home-Start, Cowshed, FirstDays, SHARE, SEND Voices Wokingham and parent groups within Schools. First Days have recently developed an accredited scheme for parent volunteers to gain certification of their experience and learning.

Volunteers gave 500 hours of time as part of Breastfeeding support network over the last year.

One key finding from an Early Years Review, conducted by Local Government Association, between November – March 2025 was linked to the need to strengthen parent voice and participation within our Children Centre services and Council run early years services in Wokingham.

Disparity in experience in the Borough

In Wokingham, some families that face disadvantage experience less engagement in early, protective service support and lower Good Levels of Development than national averages.

This is starkly contrasted with better than average outcomes and experiences for families who do not face disadvantage.



One of the key indicators for Best Start in Life and Readiness for School Success is Good Level of Development at reception. In 2024/25 we saw ongoing improvement with those having achieved expected learning goals jumping from 75.5% to 77.7%, significantly outperforming the national average of 67.7%.



54% achieved the Good Level of Development who were eligible for Free School Meals vs 79% without Free School Meals. The gap is 24% which is a 2% increase from last year.



Breastfeeding rates in Wokingham Borough at birth and at 6–8 weeks are higher than the England average. The key measure - breastfeeding at 6–8 weeks - has been steadily increasing over the last few years.



National research shows that families experiencing disadvantage are less likely to start or continue breastfeeding.



Wokingham benefits from having Dingley's Promise in the area, a specialist charitable early years provider, currently offering 15 part-time places.



Our SEND Sufficiency Statement predicts additional need in the coming years for specialist placements. Plans are underway to expand additional capacity within Wokingham Borough to meet this potential need. As a long-term vision, the local area continues to explore new ways of working and focus resources on supporting inclusion within mainstream provision.

Some gaps in understanding and response

Understanding non-attendance

All families are offered a 2-2 ½ year check. In 2024/25, around **15% of eligible children missed their 2–2½ year health check** due to non-attendance, decline, moving out of area, or no response. While Wokingham performs better than England and statistical neighbours, this means **some children's developmental needs may go unrecorded**, and they are not included in population-level measures.

Insights for people accessing/not accessing children centres

A lack of **consistent data on Children's Centre registrations** also limits our ability to identify families not accessing services or to fully understand engagement patterns.



Understanding need with perinatal mental health

Between 2020/21 and 2022/23, an average of **127 women per year accessed specialist perinatal mental health services** in Wokingham - higher than national and regional averages. More insight is needed into the experiences of these women across wider services and support.



Evidence of what works

Our goal to **grow the village for families in Wokingham** is grounded in a strong body of evidence about what makes a difference for children and families in the early years, particularly considering our insights in Wokingham:

1 Strong Social Support For Families

Research consistently shows that when families have strong social support, parents feel less stressed, family relationships are strengthened, and children's development is enhanced (Bailey et al., 2007; Dunst et al., 1988; Guralnick et al., 2008). In the early years - when families are navigating new routines and challenges - social support acts as a **safety net**, helping families through difficult times.

2 Joined-Up Support

Evidence from the Institute of Fiscal Studies (2025) shows that joined-up working in Children's Centres had lasting impacts, including:

- Fewer hospitalisations
- Improved GCSE results
- Earlier identification of needs
- Stronger family environments

This joined-up model highlights how integrated services can transform outcomes for children and families, bringing health, parent support, early learning, childcare and employment advice together.

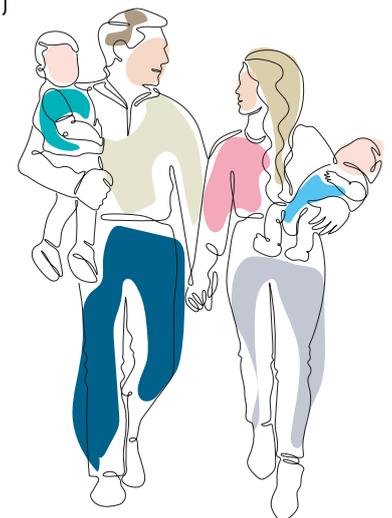
3 Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are uniquely effective because they build **trusting, equal relationships** with families, often reaching those who may not engage with traditional services. Evidence shows they help increase take-up of **entitlements**, support **breastfeeding**, and foster greater **confidence** and **connectedness** among parents.

Importantly, volunteering also benefits the volunteers themselves - boosting their confidence, satisfaction, social networks, and even employment opportunities (Barlow 2012; Spiby 2015; Young 2015). It creates a cycle of positive impact that strengthens communities as well as families.

4 Parenting Programmes

Extensive evidence shows that parenting programmes have a significant and positive impact on child development, strengthen family relationships, and improve mental health and overall wellbeing across families. (Barlow et al., 2016)



Snapshot

Home-Start Wokingham District



At Home-Start Wokingham District, our mission is to give every vulnerable child in Wokingham Borough the best start in life.

We support the whole family with children under 5 through compassionate, confidential, and non-judgmental help - offering at least three months of home visits from trained volunteers. This empowers parents with the confidence and skills to thrive independently.

Looking ahead to 2026, home visits remain central to our work. We are also preparing to launch new parent support groups in autumn/winter 2025 and are excited to be actively involved in shaping the Borough's new Family Hubs. By delivering groups from local children's centres, we will strengthen partnerships and make it easier for families to access coordinated support.

Our volunteers, often parents themselves, provide both practical and emotional support, helping families overcome challenges and build brighter futures.

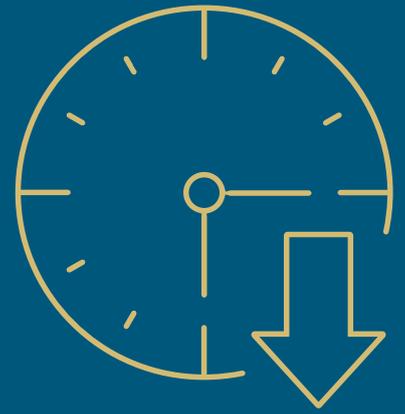
"I have volunteered with Home-start Wokingham District for over 10 years, and I do it because I like to help families in need, by supporting and encouraging mums in their parenting. Sometimes I give guidance on how to play with children or how to cope with their behaviour; sometimes mum doesn't know what other help is available so I can signpost her to other services; very often mum just needs another adult to chat to. I like to think that by highlighting and positively commenting on a mum's parenting skills, it empowers her and gives her more confidence, which can only be of benefit to the child".

"I feel we offer a friendly face at a time when many parents feel isolated and anxious looking after their young children. I had a Home-start volunteer 21 years ago and remember fondly the help she gave me".



Snapshot

Reducing waiting time for Speech and Language Therapy



Providing earlier support through a Speech and Language enquiry line.

The Early Years Speech and Language Enquiries Line was set up in 2024 and offers direct access to a specialist therapist for families, professionals, and anyone concerned about a child's communication development. This model removes the need for a referral form, enabling timely, equitable and targeted support from the first point of contact.

Calls to the enquiries line consistently require a high level of specialist skill from Speech and Language Therapists. Each conversation involves active listening, coaching, and facilitation to support parents and carers in co-producing a plan tailored to their child's needs. These calls often result in reassurance, practical advice, and signposting to existing and ordinarily available resources, such as online advice pages, workshops, and face-to-face support via the healthcare bus.

Investing in this model of pre-referral support has had a measurable impact:

Over the last quarter in 2025 an average of 44% of calls were fully managed through conversation with a Speech and Language Therapist, without the need for a formal referral or placement on a waiting list. The number of families waiting for an intervention with a Speech and Language Therapist reduced from 25 to 9 in the last quarter.

Call our Enquiries Line to get advice from a Speech and Language Therapist:

0118 904 3700 Lines are open Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am - 3.30pm.

Available for parents, carers, professionals, and early years setting staff supporting preschool children with a Berkshire GP.





How we plan to reach our goal

Our goal: To grow the village for families in Wokingham



4

The Early Years system is disconnected in parts, sometimes creating additional stress for families most in need.

5

Limited system-wide learning, data sharing and joined-up working reduces effectiveness of support for families.

Shared strategic goals across Wokingham Borough Council and key partners - NHS, Health, education, the voluntary sector and more.

Existing local training offers on Early Years and Communication.

Support from an Improvement partner to embed a learning culture.

Improve **joined-up support at human contact points**.

Deliver **shared workforce development and joint training** across sectors.

Facilitate **learning conversations and feedback loops** with families and professionals. Develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for children.

...ely to engage when support is ...o understand, and is relational.

Consistent training and shared messaging reduce confusion for families.

Collaborative learning leads to continuous service improvement across the local area.

Families facing additional challenges (e.g. care leavers, young parents, foster and adoptive parents, in temporary or unstable accommodation, health needs, etc) are well connected to family hubs, local support groups, and community resources.

Joint training and cross-sector collaboration leads to greater consistency in communication over key Early Years and health promotion messaging.

Services continually improve as a result of learning together over family experiences, and sharing insights together.

Best Start Family Hubs



FAMILY HUBS

National Context

From 2026, the Government is supporting every area in England to develop Best Start Family Hubs, designed to provide integrated, accessible support for families.

Wokingham's Approach

In Wokingham, we are launching the Best Start Family Hubs Programme, creating accessible spaces both in-person and online where families can receive coordinated support and connect with other parents and carers. These hubs will form part of our wider Family Hubs offer, supporting families with children up to age 18 - or up to 25 for those with SEND.

Families can expect a more cohesive experience as services are promoted in a coordinated way and new, complementary programmes are introduced. Our approach will leverage existing venues - including Children's Centres, Libraries, voluntary sector spaces, and Wokingham's emerging Community Hubs - to create a seamless network of support. Over time, Children's Centres operating in this model will be rebranded as **Best Start Family Hubs**.



What Best Start Family Hubs Offer

According to the Government:

“Drawing on what we know works from Sure Start and similar programmes, these hubs allow families to access professional support or simply meet other parents and build connections. They will host programmes such as Stay and Play (open to all), provide health services, and offer advice on a wide range of topics, from parenting tips to supporting children's emotional needs. Parents can join courses to boost their confidence and support their children's language and emotional development. Hubs will also connect families to wider local services such as healthcare, relationship support, employment, and housing.”

The Role of Parent Volunteers

In Wokingham, parent volunteers will be central to the success of our hubs. Their involvement will help create inclusive environments, strengthen support networks, and shape services to meet the needs of all families.

Early Engagement

As a first step, all parts of the Early Years System are invited to reflect on two key questions:

1. How can we foster stronger support networks and a sense of belonging for families through our work and partnerships?
2. What can we contribute to shared learning across the system to best support families most in need?



Our priorities

1 Test Learn and Grow, for Wokingham's Best Start Family Hubs

Learning from the research within Nesta, on effective change in Early Years, we will begin more dynamic and flexible tests/learning to try out ways of working.

We will follow Nesta's recommendations for four core shifts to enable this approach:



Put practice before policy –
a new place to start



Work in learning loops –
a new way to make progress



Test assumptions first –
a new way to handle risk



Shape conditions for success –
a new way to manage and lead

In practice this means, that we will:

- Open opportunities for new practice across different wards in Wokingham and in response to insight and need
- Create a flexible and dynamic way to include relevant people into shape specific trials, and learning loops, rather than create a set Board or Subgroup with fixed membership

A few examples of test learn and grow pilots for 2025/2026 are;

- Proactive data links with financial inclusion work in Wokingham Borough Council, to trial joined up proactive outreach to families receiving Council Tax reductions
- Health Promotion messaging trials via Public Health in Family Hub spaces

2 Human Contact Points

We will focus our development of better joined up provision at points of human contact to support families in making connections, and accessing available support.

This includes:

Pre birth

Midwifery
Postnatal
clinics within
a family hub

Birth registration

Trialling a
birth registrar
within a children's
centre

Drop-ins at groups

Early years
advisors dropping
into Early Years
groups

GP

appointments
Opportunities to
connect with
family hub worker
and VCS

Family hubs and children's centres

Re-introducing
a family worker
into family
spaces to
welcome and
support families
in access

School

Drop-ins from
services at
parent coffee
mornings,
financial inclusion,
health promotion,
family hub
workers

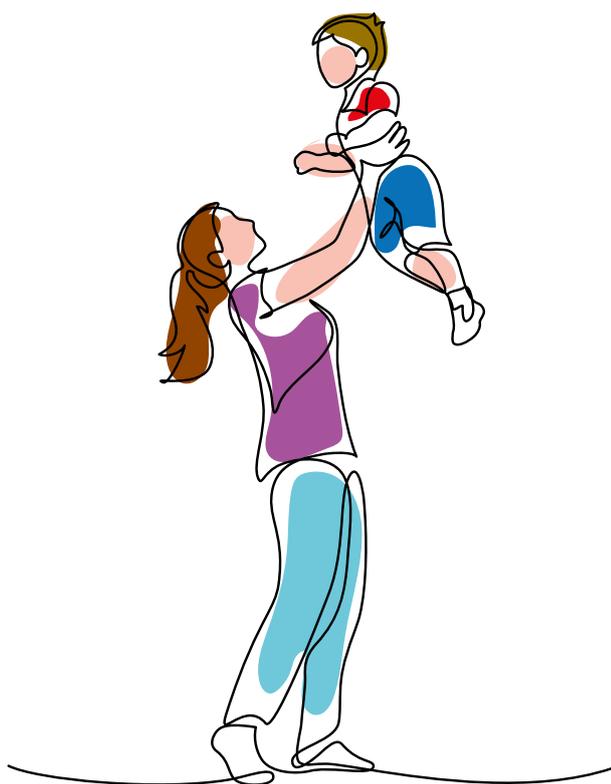
Throughout these human contact points, we will promote the NHS Healthy Start scheme as part of our early years offer, helping eligible families access nutritional and financial support to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities.

3 Parent Volunteers

Across the system for Early Years, particularly within local authority services, we are acutely aware that we need parent/carers to be much more involved to form a more accessible, inclusive, effective early years offer.

We will develop a Parent Volunteer programme that provides structured recruitment, training, support, and retention. This will ensure a diverse range of parents can contribute, gain new opportunities, and share their lived experiences.

Over the next three years, we will expand parenting support programmes as part of the Helping Early Strategy. This includes a virtual Solihull Approach offer, giving parents and practitioners access to a wide range of courses and resources anytime. Parent volunteers will be part of the parent support groups - both as supporters and as peer leaders, co-delivering sessions to build stronger, community-led support for families.



4 Improving Good Levels of Development

Improving Good Levels of Development, particularly for children eligible for Free School Meals is a whole-system activity. Together, we will:

- Develop a campaign with parents that promotes opportunities for a sense of belonging and unity as well as sharing key information about two-year-old entitlement and childcare funding, early years services and support for home-learning environments.
- Address the way information is shared both after development checks and throughout transitions between early year settings to School.
- Offer a broader range and increased number of evidence-based parenting programmes across the Borough, in person, in a variety of settings, and online.
- Regularly review and respond to the experiences and outcomes of early years children in our care and previously looked after children, as a system
- Create opportunities for parents/carers, community groups and local organisations to use Children's Centres to respond to local need, expanding the service offer, strengthening community ownership, and ensuring more families, particularly families who may experience inequalities, can feel part of their local centre or hub



5 Multi-agency Learning Conversations

To better understand family experiences and strengthen a cohesive Early Years system, we will introduce **multi-agency parent learning conversations** twice a year. These will bring together partners across health visiting, maternity, portage, early years providers, speech and language services, voluntary sector organisations, family support, children’s social care, schools, housing and more.

With consent, we will **follow the journeys of selected families** to identify barriers, strengths and needs, focusing on areas such as:

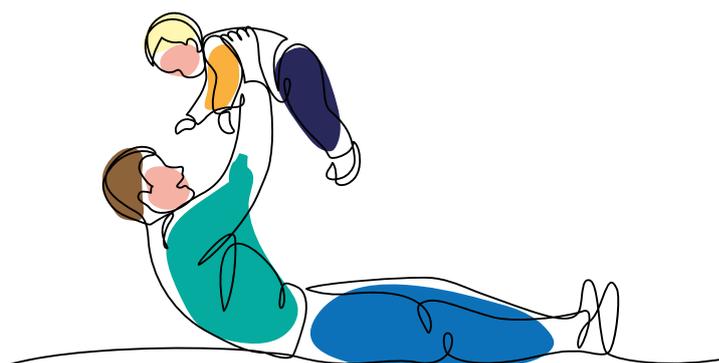
- Mothers’ experiences of specialist perinatal mental health support across the system
- Information-sharing between services on child development
- Access and engagement for families with English as an additional language

These conversations will be embedded in the **Best Start in Life Group** and form part of our wider **quality assurance framework**.

6 Workforce Development

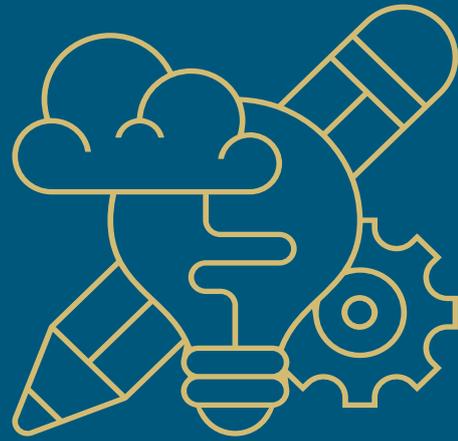
In line with national priorities, we will **expand workforce development opportunities** for the Early Years sector. Locally, this will include:

- A tailored package of accessible training for the Early Years workforce
- **Speech and Language workshops** delivered by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Extending the **Baby Friendly Initiative training** to the wider workforce



Snapshot

Test, Learn & Grow examples from 2024/25



Amy Supporting Transitions to School

Working together with Hillside School, School Nursing and the Early Years Team, we ran a 'Day in the Life of Reception' session for parents across the borough, sharing key messages and practical support to ease the move into school. Over 40 parents attended, online and in person. Building on this success, plans are underway to expand to more schools and add 'Ready for School Success' sessions in 2026.

Kat Growing the Nursery Workforce Through Apprenticeships

At Happitots, Winnersh, school and college work experience placements inspired us to think about a pathway into nursery apprenticeships once a young person finishes school. From the work experience places we held, we were able to offer work apprenticeships along with advertising for apprenticeships. By 2025, four apprentices have already qualified at Happitots, gaining experience across different settings, with three more starting this year receiving in-house training from us and following College. This approach is helping rebuild the nursery workforce, giving young people meaningful careers while strengthening support for families.

Becky Building Community Through Coffee Mornings

The Cowshed, Royal Berkshire Maternity, and Maternity & Neonatal Voices launched regular Mothers' Coffee Mornings this last year - providing welcoming spaces at Cowshed, where new and expectant mums connect, share experiences, and receive gentle guidance from maternity professionals. With coffee, cake, conversation, and a small goodie bag, mums report feeling less isolated, more confident, and part of a caring community during early parenthood.

Overarching Plan for 26 - 28

Theme	Outcome
<p>Reducing Inequalities and Inclusion</p>	<p>The gap in Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes between disadvantaged children and their peers reduces.</p> <p>Overall Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes increase to a minimum of 80% by 2028.</p>
	<p>Increased take up of supported two-year old funding.</p>
	<p>Improved maternal and child nutrition (e.g. breastfeeding rates, healthy weight).</p>
	<p>Reduced % of children who are overweight or obese at reception.</p>
	<p>Reduced % of mothers smoking in Pregnancy.</p>
<p>Support Networks and Connections</p>	<p>Families facing additional challenges (e.g. care leavers, young parents, foster/adoptive parents, families in temporary accommodation, health needs) are well connected to hubs, groups, and resources.</p>
<p>Parent Volunteers and Community Engagement</p>	<p>Parent volunteers feel valued, supported, and gain new skills and confidence.</p>
	<p>Families see parent volunteers as trusted connectors between services and the community.</p>
<p>Learning Together as a System</p>	<p>Services continually improve as a result of learning together over family experiences and sharing insights.</p>
	<p>Joint training and cross-sector collaboration lead to greater consistency in communication over key Early Years messaging.</p>

Indicator(s)	Data Source	Target
<p>% of children achieving GLD at age 5 (overall and by disadvantage status) - Size of GLD gap compared with national average.</p> <p>No. of parents receiving benefits, or experiencing disadvantage who attend parenting programmes.</p>	<p>EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) DfE statistics.</p>	<p>Gap reduces year on year; Wokingham above national average by 2028.</p> <p>Overall Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes increase to a minimum of 80% by 2028.</p>
<p>% of families taking up supported two-year-old funding.</p>	<p>DfE Early Years Entitlement data.</p>	<p>% take up of funding increases year on year.</p>
<p>Uptake: % of eligible families registered and accessing Healthy Start Card scheme and vitamins.</p> <p>Equity: Uptake among priority groups (e.g. GRT, migrant families); availability of accessible materials.</p> <p>Engagement: Number of professionals trained; reach of promotional campaigns.</p>		
<p>% of families from priority groups reporting feeling connected to support networks.</p> <p>Number of families signposted to support via family hubs.</p>	<p>Family hub monitoring data.</p> <p>Annual parent/carer survey.</p>	<p>≥75% of families report connection to support by 2026.</p>
<p>% of parent volunteers reporting feeling valued and supported - % reporting increased skills/confidence.</p>	<p>Volunteer feedback surveys.</p>	<p>≥80% feel valued by 2026</p> <p>≥70% report new skills by 2027.</p>
<p>% of families reporting positive benefit from contact with parent volunteers.</p>	<p>Family surveys Hub/service evaluation data.</p>	<p>50% of families report benefit by 2027.</p>
<p>Number of joint learning cycles (e.g. family journey workshops, service reviews) held per year.</p>	<p>Multi-agency service records.</p> <p>Case reviews.</p>	<p>≥2 cycles per year with evidence of improvements.</p>
<p>% of early years partners participating in joint training annually.</p> <p>% of parents reporting consistent messaging from services.</p>	<p>Training records.</p> <p>Annual parent/carer survey.</p>	<p>≥90% partners trained annually by 2026 with agreed EY workforce development.</p>

How we will be accountable

Our governance structure brings together a diverse mix of professionals and parent representatives. It is collaborative rather than top-down-shaped in partnership with the community and responsive to lived experience, feedback, needs, and strengths.



However, we will strengthen this through the way in which we meet together, the content and membership. This includes:

Board/Group	Change	Detail
Ready for School Success group	Reshape to become 'EY Test, Learn & Grow Working Group'.	Incorporating trials from Ready for School Success, it will also include other trials as part of Best Start Family Hub development. Membership will vary based on the trials discussed at each meeting.
Best Start in Life Group	The delivery of this strategy, alongside the accompanying Best Start in Life Delivery Plan will form the main responsibility of the group. Learning conversations held twice a year for multi-agency learning of family experience.	Ad hoc membership will be introduced to EY services and parent volunteers where agenda items are relevant to them, to broaden the input of the system. Core membership will extend to Family Hub workers, Early Help.
Children & Young People's Partnership (CYPP)	Learning Conversations, and learning from trials fed up into CYPP.	Learning conversation overview shared by Chair of Best Start in Life Group.
Wokingham Borough Education Partnership	Early Years impact and insights review presented annually.	Through Best Start in Life reporting.



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Appendix – Good Level of Development Guidance 2025

Early Years Profile 2024-25

Background

The following data and gap analysis focuses on the proportion of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of Reception year, whether in schools or other early years providers. By September 2025, these children will have transitioned into Year 1.

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children’s development is assessed across seven areas of learning. These are divided into three prime areas - which are fundamental to early development - and four specific areas, which build on and strengthen the prime areas. Each area contains distinct aspects of learning, with corresponding Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that set out the expected level of achievement by the end of Reception year. .

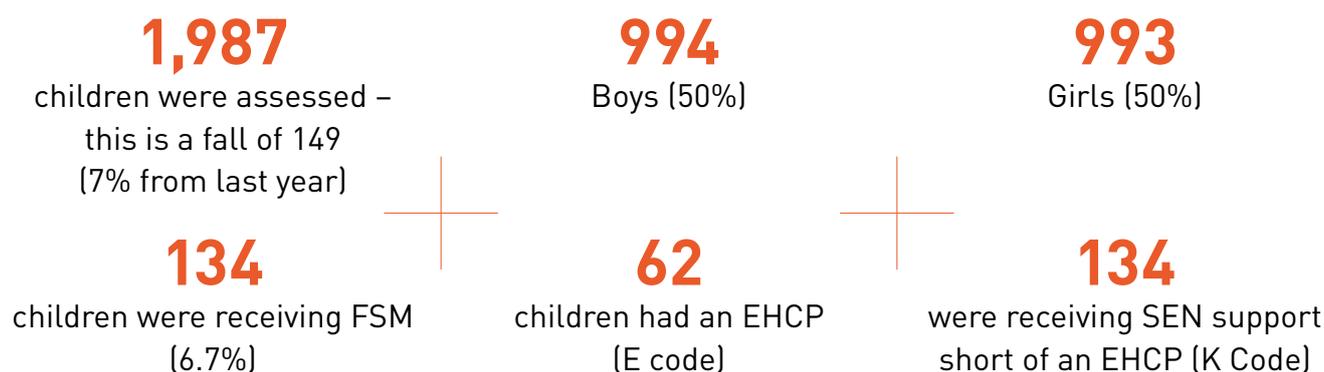
Areas of Learning and Development			
Prime Areas			
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Physical Development	Communication and Language	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Regulation • Managing Self • Building Relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross Motor Skills • Fine Motor Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening, Attention and Understanding • Speaking 	
Specific Areas			
Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the World	Expressive Arts and Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension • Word Reading • Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number • Numerical Patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past and Present • People, Culture and Communities • The Natural World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating with Materials • Being Imaginative and Expressive

In order for a child to be deemed to have a good level of development they must reach the expected level in all of the goals in the prime areas as well as the specific areas of Literacy and Mathematics. There are a total of 17 goals with 12 of them being counted in the GLD determination.

Class teachers assess each child against the Early Learning Goals and submit the outcomes to their local authority. Schools are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of these assessments through internal moderation or working with other local schools. External moderation of EYFSP judgements is no longer carried out.

2024-2025 Headlines

Demographics



Overall Good Level of Development (GLD)

- 1,536 children achieved GLD (77.3%) 451 children did not (22.7%)
- is 2 % higher than last year and will again be above national average.

Early Learning Goals

Area of Learning	Goal	% achieved
Communication and Language	Listening and Attention	89%
	Speaking	90%
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self regulation	91%
	Managing Self	92%
	Building relationships	93%
Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills	95%
	Fine Motor Skills	91%
Literacy	Comprehension	89%
	Word Reading	86%
	Writing	81%
Mathematics	Numbers	87%
	Numerical Patterns	87%
Understanding the World	Past and Present	90%
	People, Cultures and Communities	90%
	The Natural World	92%
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials	94%
	Being Imaginative and Expressive	93%



These are strong overall results for Wokingham Borough. Each of the %s for goals in PSED has increased since last year by 1-3%

As in recent years the goal with the least number of children achieving is writing (81%) however it should be noted that this is an increase of 2% from last year and so beginning to move in the right direction.



Gaps (difference between GLD scores for children with certain characteristics)

- Gender – 71% Boys vs 83% Girls – Gap 12% (same as last year)
- 54% achieved the GLD who were eligible for Free School Meals vs 79% without Free School Meals. The gap is 24% which is a 2% increase from last year.
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) – 74 % with EAL vs 78% without EAL – Gap 4% (same as last year)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) (E and K codes) – 22 % achieved GLD (43 out of 196) with E/K codes vs 83% achieved GLD without a E/K code- Gap 61% (23 % increase from last year)



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