

TRAFFORD

BEST START IN LIFE
LOCAL PLAN



TRAFFORD
BEST START
FAMILY HUB



Best Start in Life Plan

Our Vision for 2030

Every child gets the best start in life, growing up happy, healthy and achieving their potential, making sure no child is left behind. Parents and families will feel confident to support babies and young children and to ask for support when they need it from a well-integrated, knowledgeable workforce, and from a thriving community.

Targets

Our targets:

By 2028 over 80% of children will reach a Good Level of Development and over 55% of children accessing Free School Meals will reach a Good Level of Development. This equates to 155 more children overall and 18 more children eligible for Free School Meals than today.

The % of children with SEND reaching a Good Level of Development will be above the national level.

To increase take up of the Early Learning for 2 year olds early education offer to over 87%.

As an indicator of creating healthier environments for our children and support to families to improve their children's health, we aim to reduce the % of 5-year-olds in Trafford with visually obvious dental decay (currently 25.1%) to below the England average (currently 22.4%).

We aim to do this whilst also reducing inequalities and so intend to see rates of visually obvious dental decay in 5-year-olds in North Trafford become closer to the rate in South Trafford.

II. Case for Action

Current state

In Trafford we are proud that so many children and families are thriving. We know that our educational and health outcomes, including children's development at the end of the reception year are significantly above the national average. Already in 2026 74% of Trafford children reach a Good Level of Development which is nearly at the national 2028 target of 75%.

It is our ambition, however, that all children are able to achieve and thrive to their full potential, irrespective of their circumstances or postcode.

We know there is more that could be done to improve outcomes for:

- Children with SEND
- Children eligible for free school meals
- Children who are looked after

Our priority will be to:

- Support families with children with SEND
- Support families who are living in low-income households, living in poverty, living in temporary accommodation and alleviate the effects of this at every opportunity
- Support families who may be socially isolated or experiencing poor mental health
- Increase take-up of the Early Learning for 2 year olds early education offer for eligible families.

Nearly a quarter of children and families in Trafford are living in poverty, some of whom are experiencing homelessness and forced to reside in temporary accommodation.

Domestic abuse is a feature of too many children's and families' lives and is a concern in a significant proportion of contacts at the front door for children's services. Domestic abuse support for families is good but under pressure.

Gross motor skills for two-year-olds are below the national average. This development can be supported with active play, outdoor play and decreased screen time. The digital world and the impact of this continues to create ongoing challenges. Children and families have told us that access to parks, gardens and green spaces that feel safe are important to them.

Narrowing health inequalities is at the heart of our plan. Speech, language and communication is a key issue for many children in Trafford, and we know that this is a child wellbeing indicator and key predictor of future life chances. Nearly a quarter of children across Trafford experience tooth decay and we know that poorer health outcomes are experienced where there are higher rates of poverty and need. This includes lower take up of immunisation, lower birth weights and increasing risks of infant mortality.

For this reason, there will be enhanced provision and support in the north and west of the borough and particularly in our Fairer Trafford Communities of:

Old Trafford

Partington
Sale West
Broomwood

Existing services

In Trafford we have good universal services which include our Healthy Child Programme delivered by health visitors and sufficient, high quality early education delivered by both schools and the private, voluntary, independent sector. We are lucky to have such a vibrant VCFSE sector that is invested in supporting families. A faith sector mapping found that universal play and stays delivered by church-based organisations alone, are reaching approximately 50% of families with a child aged 0-5 years old at some point in their early years.

Early identification and support for children with SEND in the early years is strong with Trafford Early Development Services (TEDS), Special Educational Needs Advisory Service (SENAS) and the Sensory Impairment Support Service highly valued by parents and early education settings.

Existing support for parents to help improve children's development include an evidence based online programme 'Togetherness' which promotes compassionate and responsive parenting and our face-to-face peer led programme 'Empowering Parents Empowering Communities' programme. These sit alongside other programmes that improve speech, language and communication, parent child relationships and support for families reducing the impact of family conflict.

Speech and language support is good with universal use of the WellComm digital toolkit and Big Book of Ideas across all early education providers including schools. Targeted support is available to families and Trafford has one of the lowest wait times for specialist Speech and Language support.

Enhancements to existing service offers are:

Needs-led support for families with children who are neurodivergent or on the autism/ ADHD pathway.

Support for parents which includes:

- Promotion, access and support to a range of online and in person evidence-based programmes.
- Outreach support for parents struggling to access support.
- Evidence based programmes of support for parents of children aged 5 and under with SEND
- A community based antenatal parenting education offer for families who require this enhanced offer
- Support to enhance the Home Learning Environment to support narrowing the attainment gap. PEEP has been identified as Trafford's evidence-based programme.
- Enhanced support for families in Fairer Trafford Communities. For example, enhanced Health Visitor led developmental checks and home visits in areas with greater health inequity.

- Inclusive services for fathers.
- Support for families living in poverty, affected by low income and experiencing housing issues.
- Holistic support and increased prevention of harm from domestic abuse
- Support for young parents who are care experienced and for kinship carers
- Support for families to support parent child relationships particularly children aged 2-5.

III. Core Best Start in Life service aims

Home learning environment and parenting interventions

We will extend the reach of our parenting programmes and introduce a home learning environment evidence-based programme. We will develop outreach models and family feedback to improve our offer and enable access for families.

Priority actions:

1. Commission, roll out training and implement PEEP Learning Together Programme as our home learning environment evidence-based programme delivering in our universal play and stays and as a targeted programme to support transition to school.
2. Continue to grow and accelerate our peer-led parenting programme, Empowering Parents Empowering Communities to increase reach to a wide range of families and communities.
3. Extend the reach and take up of our on-line Togetherness programme offering a blended offer of support to parent carers as they complete the programme.
4. Prioritise outreach and engagement for targeted groups, which include families not accessing early education or accessing 15 hours, families where parents may be experiencing poor mental health or barriers to access and families identified by our needs assessment and in our identified Fairer Trafford Communities.
5. Increase uptake of our evidence-based digital parenting recognising the high working population in Trafford.

Measures of progress:

Enrolment and completion rates of parenting programmes and digital offers; family feedback; ASQ-SE; improved child development

High quality early education for all

We will increase take up of the free early education entitlement for families who meet the Early Learning for 2 year olds eligibility and families with children with SEND, ensuring that high quality provision is available.

Priority actions:

1. Develop a partnership approach to promoting and increasing take-up of free early education entitlement, which includes the development of an information sharing protocol with health visitors.
2. Conduct ongoing monitoring of sufficiency, especially in areas where take-up is lower, to ensure that places are available, accessible and convenient and offer enhanced brokerage and support to enable access.
3. Work in partnership with early education providers to shape business models that are both sustainable and inclusive.
4. Develop processes and opportunities to engage with parents to understand choices and remove any barriers to access.
5. Implement half termly joining dates, not termly, for children eligible for the 3 and 4 year 15-hour entitlement, as well as the Early Learning for 2 year olds offer to ensure swifter access to early education for any child new to early education.
6. Continue to support strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of the early years' workforce.
7. Integrate early education providers and schools with the Best Start Family Hub partnership to connect families to the offers.
8. Support settings to embed improved oral health and healthy weight support into early years

Measures of progress:

Take-up of early education entitlement; sufficiency in areas of high need; high quality training for early years practitioners; supervised toothbrushing delivery in settings

Transition to school and reception year

We will use multi-agency working to continue to improve transition for children and families into reception year, and support teachers to offer the learning and support children need.

Priority actions:

1. Build on the success of our Transition Conference and co-produced materials promoting the principles of 'Ready Settings, Ready Family, Ready Child' as a holistic approach to supporting transition.

2. Refresh, promote and embed our Trafford Supporting Transitions in the Early Years Guidance as our key document for supporting transition in the early years.
3. Promote use of the agreed Trafford Early Years Transition Passport amongst early education settings and schools.
4. Support enhanced transition for any identified children e.g. children with SEND ensuring that every child has an 'All About Me'
5. Facilitate transition events in all four neighbourhoods.
6. Establish multi-agency locality transition networks in priority areas using PEEP Learning Together Programme to support school readiness.
7. Use the View Your Education Data (VYED) platform to identify schools that may benefit from enhanced locality working

Measures of progress:

Children settle quickly into schools (feedback from parents and schools); improved Good Level of Development at end of reception year

SEND support

We will ensure there is a needs-led approach to supporting children with emerging need and SEND so that children can achieve and thrive.

Priority actions:

1. We will ensure that Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision is implemented and embedded across all early education settings to support inclusion
2. We will monitor and support sufficiency of early education places for children with SEND.
3. We will support the development of children's speech, language and communication by implementing a balanced system.
4. Co-produce and develop a clear Best Start in Life Offer for families across our Best Start Family Hubs which will include play and stays, Riding the Rapids, parent support, peer support, speech and language support etc
5. Improve transitions for children in the early years, particularly from private, voluntary independent setting to school by working in a timely way.

6. Raise awareness and support for parent carers and wider workforce in effective strategies to support children with:
 - * Sensory Processing/OT
 - * Toileting
 - * Selective Eating
7. Recruit and embed specialist SEND practitioners as part of the Best Start Family Hub Offer

Measures of progress:

Family feedback on ability to access quality SEND advice; recruitment of specialists; sufficiency assessment showing available places; parental feedback on accessibility of early education entitlement.

Maternal and early years health services

We will improve join up between health and family support services and parents to address health inequalities and ensure families can access a range of services to support their child's health and development and look after their own wellbeing.

Priority actions:

1. Enhance Health Visiting and Community Nursery Nurses to introduce an additional developmental check and enhanced home visiting for 3- and 4-year olds in areas of high need to support access to a range of advice and information including PEEP, Togetherness, early education, parenting support, speech and language – and support school readiness.
2. Increase take-up of key health visiting contacts, particularly for priority families and in Fairer Trafford communities, to ensure no child is left behind.
3. Ensure relationships and pathways between health visitors and wider health and social providers are maintained to ensure joint working and, where appropriate, timely and appropriate requests for further support for families and children.
4. Develop information sharing arrangements to support integration within Best Start Family Hubs.
5. Enhance support for families experiencing homelessness, those in temporary accommodation, transient communities and those at risk of homelessness including domestic abuse refuges.
6. Review and ensure adequate provision of new baby equipment, resources and information to help reduce risks of infant mortality and stress for families.

7. Promote take-up of Healthy Start benefit including vouchers, vitamins and entitlements. Promote healthy nutrition through infant feeding support from breastfeeding to first foods and beyond.
8. Continue and expand take-up of oral health campaign including supervised brushing and resources for disadvantaged families.
9. Increase take-up of childhood vaccines in communities where this is low through consistent messaging and trusted relationships.
10. Recruit a Best Start Family Hub midwife to develop joined-up antenatal and post-natal support and advice in Hubs and lead on delivery of Bump to Babies Parent Education offer for targeted cohorts.
11. Support early attachment and parent-infant mental health for 0-2s at universal and specialist levels and develop offer for 3-5 year olds and their families working with GM Mental Health Hub.
12. Support parents with their own health or social needs to ensure an inclusive service, through staff training and pathways to additional support through Live Well and Community Hubs.
13. Make every contact count for parent and child health such as smoking, alcohol use, food, sexual health and reducing parental conflict.

Measures of progress:

Oral health of 5-year-olds; take-up of supervised brushing and distribution of toothbrushes to target cohorts; Healthy Start take-up rates; vaccination rates; healthy weight in reception

Visits completed and ASQ outcomes by cohort and geography

Antenatal contacts from FH networked staff; programmes delivered; parental confidence

Friends and Family Feedback and case studies from services commissioned

IV. System enablers

Service integration & Best Start Family Hubs

We will ensure our Best Start Family Hub Networks work together across neighbourhoods to support families to access to a range of useful activities, information, advice and support. Our networked 'places and spaces' will be supportive and welcoming, and our strong partnerships will ensure there is a 'no wrong door' approach for any family.

Priority actions:

1. Embed our Best Start Family Hub Network across our four neighbourhoods as part of our wider Live Well approach.
2. Establish joined up Best Start in Life Leadership Group in each neighbourhood which will include the Early Years Consultant, Trafford Families Lead, Heads of Service Leads for Health Visiting and School Nursing and a Lead VCFSE Sector for babies, children and parent voice.
3. Work collaboratively with the Voluntary Community Faith Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector as key partners in shaping and delivering the Best Start Family Hub offer and ensuring this reaches all families.
4. Ensure we have a Best Start Family Hub base in each of our four neighbourhoods.
5. Co-locate specialists, including health and SEND practitioners to deliver the Best Start Family Hub Offer.
6. Ensure that Families First and Live Well developments are integrated with Best Start Family Hubs and that learning and developments lead to a joined-up approach for families.
7. Commissioning arrangements and new specifications link to Best Start Family Hubs to support service integration.
8. Embedding and improving the reach of our communications and information for families so they can support themselves and navigate our offers more easily.

Measures of progress: Percentage of families in target groups accessing Best Start Family Hubs; family feedback on welcoming environment & ease of access

Workforce capacity and capabilities

We will ensure that our workforce has the right knowledge and skills to work in an inclusive way, delivering high quality provision and support to families in the early years.

Priority actions:

1. Work with partners to strengthen recruitment and retention where we know there are shortages e.g. early education settings.
2. Promote and adopt the GM Reflect toolkit and framework to support continuous professional development and consistency across the wider workforce.
3. Deliver a coordinated programme of professional development that promotes shared understanding of Best Start priorities and ways of working; this will include

Trafford's relational approach, evidence-based programmes, working with families with SEND.

3. Embed a strengths-based, family centred approach across the workforce underpinned by Trafford's relational practice principles.

4. Develop a father-inclusive approach across Family Hub Best Start in Life Services – identifying champions to drive this work across the system.

Measures of progress: Census data regarding the early education workforce; attendance at training; recruitment of father-inclusive champions and feedback from fathers.

Family Involvement

We will build on the success of our Start for Life Babies and Parent Voice project which places lived experience at the heart of all we do. We will continue to work closely with voluntary and community sector organisations and other trusted partners to ensure families are involved in shaping and co-designing services that meet the needs of families in their communities.

Priority actions:

1. Commission a VCFSE partner to be the 'strategic' partner leading on parent voice and co-design linking with the Trafford Community Collective to ensure there is a key role in Family Hubs and Best Beginnings Board Governance.
2. Co-produce, co-design and review Best Start in Life offers with families.
3. Reach a wide range of parent carers to ensure that diverse views are heard and facilitate and enable involvement and engagement at differing levels.
4. Establish regular feedback sessions with voluntary and community sector organisations via the Community Collective and faith-based groups to share knowledge about family needs and priorities.

Measures of progress: Number of parents involved in shaping services; evidence of service changes in response to parental feedback; parental engagement with services; increased parental awareness of available services and support.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

We will embed robust monitoring and evaluation across our services to create a shared learning culture underpinned by continuous improvement. We will routinely review the Best Start Family Hub Offer based on families' feedback and lived experience to improve the lives of children and their families

Priority actions:

1. Establish a shared outcomes framework across services.
2. Explore systems and digital solutions that will help collate data and information to enable effective monitoring across the network including qualitative and quantitative measures.
3. Develop information sharing across health visiting, family hubs, early education settings and schools and partners (where appropriate).
4. Embed ways to collect parent and practitioner feedback regularly.
5. Develop a data dashboard to inform decision-making at neighbourhood and Trafford level.
6. Work with GM and National colleagues to learn and share challenges and good practice.

Measures of progress: Outcomes framework signed off by partners; routine collection of parent and practitioner feedback; numbers of families attending / participating

Accountability and governance

Our well-established Best Beginnings Board will continue to provide governance and accountability arrangements to ensure the high-quality delivery of our Best Start in Life local plan, with a focus on multi-agency ownership, co-ordination, and shared responsibility and improvement.

Priority actions:

1. Create Best Start in Life core teams and wider partnership network linked to our neighbourhood model of working.
2. Ensure that Best Start in Life priorities are embedded in neighbourhood and Live Well plans to ensure there is a clear understanding of priorities across the life course, starting with Best Start in Life.
3. Continue to formally embed babies, children and parent voice in governance building on the success of the Start for Life Babies and Parent Voice project.
4. Overall governance will be provided by Trafford's Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership with links to the Health and Well Being Board.

Measures of progress: Regular meetings with attendance from partners; evidence that partnership decisions are informed by insights; parent voice formally embedded in governance.



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