



# Best Start Plan North Yorkshire

April 2026 to March 2029



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# 1. A vision for Children in North Yorkshire

## **Every baby, child, and family in North Yorkshire will have the best start in life.**

We want all children to grow up safe, healthy, happy, and ready to learn – able to form friendships, enjoy their early childhood, feel a strong sense of belonging in their communities, and know where to find support whenever they need it.

Our vision is that **early support and high-quality early education and childcare are available to every family**, no matter where they live. We will work in a joined-up way with children, families, communities, and key partners so that babies and young children receive the right help at the right time, delivered in the right place, building on our Grow and Learn model.

We are committed to creating an inclusive early years system where **every child's Development areas are understood and responded to quickly**, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). All children must receive timely and effective support so they can thrive, make strong progress in their development, and achieve their potential.

Through this plan, we will build a fair, ambitious, and connected early years offer – one that gives every child in North Yorkshire the best start in life and the opportunity to thrive. By strengthening early support, inclusion, and high-quality early education and childcare across all communities, we will ensure that every child has the strongest foundations for lifelong wellbeing, learning, and opportunity.



## Why are we developing a Best Start in Life Plan

North Yorkshire Council and its partners are committed to ensuring every child has the best possible start in life. Building on this shared ambition, we are strengthening how we work with families, communities, and local services to create the conditions for strong, supportive local networks. These networks will enable every child to thrive, feel safe, and develop a strong sense of belonging within their own community.

This plan sets out our collective priorities and the actions we will take over the next three years to achieve this ambition. It provides a clear, sustainable framework that will guide our work now and lay firm foundations for a model that extends beyond 2029.

The plan will also enable us to meet the Good Level of Development (GLD) Government set target for North Yorkshire. It is expected that at the end of Reception for the 2027/28 academic year at least 80% of children will achieve GLD; and the proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) will be at least 56.5%.

*"Science tells us that a child's experiences from conception through their first five years will go on to shape their next 50. It tells us that the kind of children we raise today, will reflect the kind of world we will live in tomorrow. It tells us that investing in the start of life is not an indulgence, but economically, socially and psychologically vital to a prosperous society."*

Jason Knauf, CEO of the Royal Foundation, December 2020

*"Turning this around will be our central priority. That begins with a new Best Start Family service: bringing together the services families need both in communities and through a new digital platform to give parents easy access to a network of advice, support and guidance to help their children thrive. This will be backed by local Best Start Plans, co-produced by local authorities together with their communities and in response to local needs."*

Giving every child the best start in life – A policy paper (2025)

## 2. Strategic Alignment and Foundations for Success

Our approach recognises that the foundations for lifelong success are built in early childhood. This fully aligns with North Yorkshire's ambition for every child to have the **Best Start in Life**, including tackling inequalities so children's backgrounds do not determine their future opportunities.

### Alignment with National Context and Health System Reform

The plan will be cognisant of all existing statutory duties particularly related to the Children's Act (2004) and Childcare Act (2016) alongside recent emerging reform announcements. The plan will be reviewed as new guidance is published.

The wider reform landscape includes the move towards a **Neighbourhood Health Service** within the national 10 Year Health Plan, emphasising three system shifts:

- **Hospital to community**
- **Analogue to digital**
- **Sickness to prevention**

These shifts reinforce our joint ambition for a more integrated, preventative and community-based system that supports families from pregnancy through the early years.

Key NHS commitments that align with BSIL include:

- Strengthened community-based care for babies, children and young people
- A clear national focus on the **first 1,001 days**, including checks, vaccinations and timely developmental support
- Introduction of a single child identifier across health, education and social care
- Digital transformation including **'My Children'** within the NHS App and a **digital Red Book**
- Improved early support for children with SEND that does not rely on diagnosis
- A **Children's Health Investment Standard** to protect child health funding
- A dedicated **Children and Young People's Implementation Plan** with milestones
- A national workforce strategy to increase specialist child health professionals

Locally, the LA and partners will:

- Work closely with NHS-led Local Care Partnerships and emerging neighbourhood plans
- Ensure the needs of **0-5 year olds** are embedded within future models of care
- Strengthen integration between **Best Start Family Hubs**, Neighbourhood Health Centres and early years services
- Adapt and refine the BSIL plan as national reforms evolve and new evidence emerges

## Alignment with Every Child Achieving and Thriving

The *Every Child Achieving and Thriving* commitments emphasise:

- Early family support
- Timely access to help
- Strengthened support for inclusion from the earliest stages

The reforms would introduce:

- A trained **SEND practitioner in every Best Start Family Hub** offering early, open-access guidance
- Stronger partnership working with health to deliver a **prevention focused, early identification model**
- New funding to strengthen **SEND support in early years settings**
- Improved inclusive practice from the start of a child's journey

The LA and partners will ensure:

- Families can access inclusive, timely SEND support without waiting for diagnosis
- Early years settings are equipped to meet a wide range of development areas
- Best Start Family Hubs become central to early identification and joined up support
- Children's development areas are met early so they can thrive through their early education journey



# Local Partnerships and Governance

## Existing strategic commitment

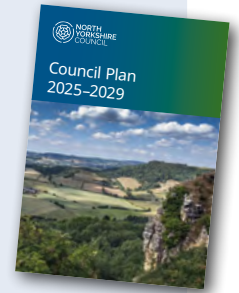
### Council plan

The council plan 2025 to 2029 sets out the council’s vision, ambitions and priorities for the next four years, as well as the approach it will take to achieve them.

The plan is based around four key themes

- support thriving places and empowered communities that live, work, visit and do business in North Yorkshire
- develop more sustainable and connected places across North Yorkshire
- ensure the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy and living well
- maximise the potential of North Yorkshire’s people and communities

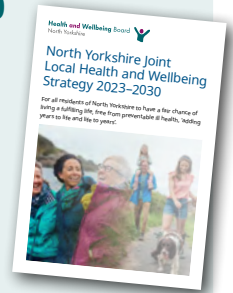
Each theme is complimented by the aims of the Best Start Plan.



### The North Yorkshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2030

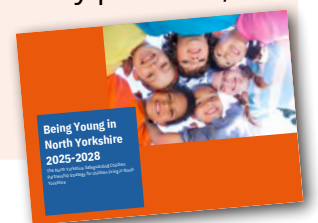
There is a clear commitment to Best Start shown throughout the document and accountability for delivery of this plan will be demonstrated through links with the Health and Wellbeing Board updates and challenge.

*Our priorities focus on areas where there are opportunities for partners to work together, to have a real impact on health and wellbeing outcomes for people of all ages, to provide children with the best start in life and to reduce health inequalities.*

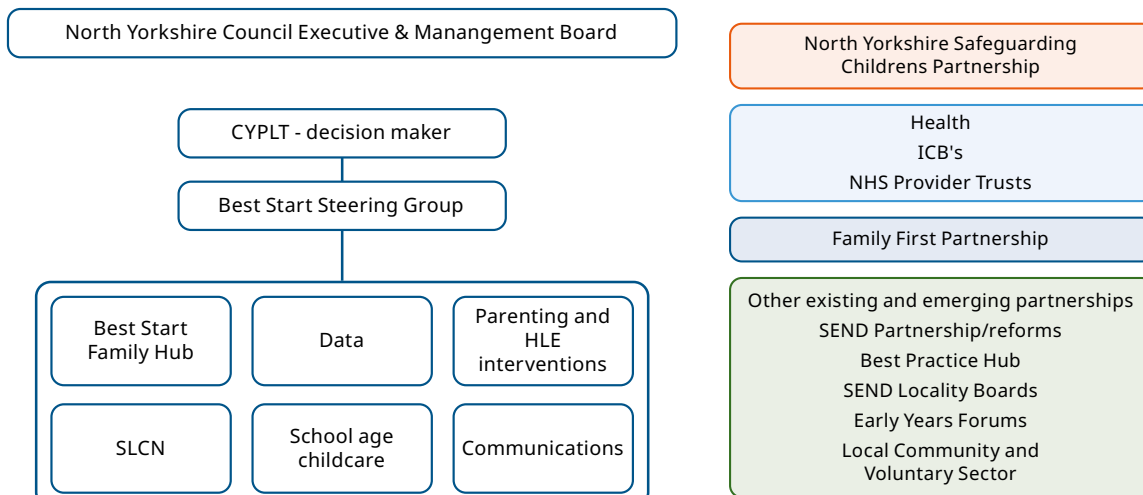


### Being Young in North Yorkshire (2025-2028)

The "Being Young in North Yorkshire" strategy aims to ensure that children and young people are happy, healthy, safe, and able to achieve their goals. This strategy outlines key priorities, including promoting positive mental health, fostering safe environments, and enhancing educational opportunities. It has an identified area of focus and sign of success directly linked to providing a Best Start in Life.



## Governance Diagram



## 3. A local needs analysis of babies, children and families



**Around 5000  
babies are born in  
North Yorkshire  
each year.**

We have used a variety of existing data sets to conduct an initial needs assessment. For example :

- Number of 2 - 2.5 yr reviews completed
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire outcomes
- Early Language Intervention Measure outcomes
- Good Level of Development – overall and communication, comprehension and language levels
- Numbers of Free School meal eligibility
- Uptake of funded Early Years Education

### **Where Best Start Family Hubs Are Most Needed**

Our initial assessment shows that some areas of North Yorkshire have a higher level of need for early help and family support. These findings help us decide where Best Start Family Hubs and outreach services will have the greatest impact.

### **Priority areas with the strongest evidence of need**

#### **Selby**

Selby has been identified as a priority area for a Best Start Family Hub because:

- A high number of young children are showing concerns across several areas of development at a very early stage
- Need is concentrated in specific neighbourhoods, making it well suited to both a local hub and targeted outreach support

## Catterick

This area is a priority because:

- There are high numbers and high proportions of children with developmental concerns that could benefit from early support
- These concerns are seen at different stages as children grow
- Because need is focused in particular neighbourhoods, a local hub would be well placed to support families
- The area has a highly mobile population linked to military families, which increases the need for joined-up and accessible family support

## Scarborough, Filey and Whitby (Coastal Area)

The coastal area, with outreach into Eastfield and Seamer, forms a clear and connected area of need.

These localities show:

- Ongoing concerns around early language and child development
- High levels of vulnerability linked to social and economic factors

A Best Start Family Hub based in Scarborough would be well placed, as the area shows:

- High levels of early development concerns that would benefit from support
- Evidence of difficulties from toddler years through to school entry
- Significant socio-economic challenges affecting families

## Areas with more localised or dispersed need

### Harrogate (Pannal, Killinghall)

Overall, Harrogate shows moderate levels of need. However, some wards and postcodes experience much higher levels of concern.

A Best Start Family Hub would only be appropriate if it covered a wider area and supported several vulnerable neighbourhoods, as need is more spread out.

## Targeted outreach areas

### Northallerton North

Northallerton North is a medium-priority area:

- Developmental concerns are evident, although the number of children affected is lower
- A hub located nearby could provide outreach support to families in this area

### Ryedale

Ryedale should be supported through targeted outreach because:

- A relatively high proportion of children show early developmental needs
- Rural location and transport challenges can increase vulnerability, even where population numbers are smaller
- Outreach support can help prevent later gaps in school readiness for children in rural communities

## Our Proposed Best Start Family Hub Model

Based on where need is most concentrated and how communities are spread across the county, the evidence supports a hub-and-spoke model.

- **Primary hub locations**

- Selby – serving the wider district
- Scarborough Coastal Area
- Catterick – serving Richmondshire

- **Secondary hubs and outreach areas**

- Harrogate – secondary hub supporting multiple neighbourhoods
- Northallerton – with outreach into Northallerton North
- Sowerby and Stokesley
- Ryedale – outreach support

This approach ensures Best Start Family Hubs are located where need is greatest, while still reaching families in more rural or dispersed communities.

## What are families telling us - Voice of Families

*'We must engage with parents and families ensuring their experiences and outcomes are at the heart of our reforms. We must listen to and work closely with professionals who work with families, babies and young children. We want to see health, children's and family services, nurseries, childminders, schools, charities, and businesses connecting and collaborating to deliver this shared mission.'*

Listening to the voices of families who will use the North Yorkshire Best Start Family Hubs offer is essential because their personal experiences, ideas, and feedback will help us understand what works well and where we can improve.

*For example parents accessing Homestart Richmondshire said they would like support on parenting skills, children's wellbeing, their own wellbeing and family management. They also stated they liked being able to meet in the community, make friends and chat, reducing isolation. One parent described the support they received: "Having a listening ear, and someone to help overcome my anxieties and just connecting with another adult." And another said, "Having help gaining my independence again after having children and improving my isolation within the community due to the SEN needs of the family, also help to signpost to different agencies to help."*

Partners tell libraries are a trusted place in the community and could act as a hub for all families. Provision of safe spaces to support children's learning, language development and family social integration is also crucial to our plans.

This feedback tells us the offer must be trusted, accessible and genuinely meet the needs of our community.

To enhance engagement work initially and throughout the Best Start in Life programme we are embarking on a series of activities that will be facilitated through the North Yorkshire Community Anchor Organisations. These are trusted voluntary community groups that exist in most areas of North Yorkshire. However, engagement will not be limited by this and everyday conversations with parents and families with children aged 0-5 aim to be captured.

We will be carrying out a comprehensive needs assessment that will support reviewing the plan and inform actions across the life of the programme.



# 4. Best Start in Life Key Themes

| <b>BSiL Key Theme 1: Better Support for Families</b>   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Children’s Readiness</b>  | <b>Families’ Readiness</b>  | <b>Schools’ Readiness</b>  |
| <p><b>We will create strong foundations for early development by:</b></p> <p>Ensuring high quality early years provision across all communities</p> <p>Strengthening Health Visiting services, including timely development reviews</p> <p>Maintaining a strong focus on early developmental milestones</p> <p>Reducing inequalities in early outcomes, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> | <p><b>We will strengthen the support available to parents and carers by:</b></p> <p>Delivering <b>Best Start Family Hubs</b> and connected community-based services</p> <p>Providing <b>parenting programmes and targeted interventions</b> where needed</p> <p>Supporting families to enrich the <b>home learning environment</b></p> <p>Ensuring <b>Early Help</b> is accessible at the right time, preventing escalation</p> | <p><b>We will support smooth, well planned transitions into school by:</b></p> <p>Strengthening partnerships between <b>early years settings and schools</b></p> <p>Embedding <b>inclusive practice</b> so all children’s development areas are recognised and well supported</p> <p>Developing <b>shared expectations</b> with families, communities and professionals so children are ready for reception and early learning</p> |
| <b>Enabled by System-Wide Collaboration</b>  |   |  |
| <p><b>We will build a consistent, integrated system by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joining up health, education and social care to remove duplication and gaps</li> <li>• Improving multi agency pathways and information sharing</li> <li>• Aligning workforce development, commissioning and local priorities across the system</li> </ul>   |   |  |



## BSiL Key Theme 2: More Accessible Early Education and Childcare

Accessible and affordable early education improves children’s life chances and supports families’ choices around work and home life. Many families find childcare complex and costly. Through this plan, the LA and partners will strengthen local provision and support the national “working families” entitlement alongside the refreshed Early Learning for 2 year olds offer, which North Yorkshire will promote throughout the lifetime of this plan. **This theme is delivered through four key areas of commitment.**

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Increase Access and Availability</b></p> <p><b>We will expand and sustain early education and childcare by:</b></p> <p>Increasing childcare places across rural, coastal and urban communities</p> <p>Supporting providers to develop sustainable, flexible provision</p> <p>Ensuring families can access childcare when and where they need it</p> | <p><b>Promote Early Learning for 2 Year Olds</b></p> <p><b>We will increase uptake of the entitlement by:</b></p> <p>Promoting the offer through <b>Best Start Family Hubs and targeted outreach</b></p> <p>Working with health, early years providers and community organisations to increase awareness</p> <p>Ensuring families receive <b>clear, accessible communication</b> about eligibility and benefits</p> | <p><b>Improve Quality and Inclusion</b></p> <p><b>We will improve outcomes for children by:</b></p> <p>Strengthening the <b>early years workforce</b>, including training and CPD</p> <p>Promoting <b>inclusive practice</b> across all early years settings</p> <p>Reducing inequalities in early outcomes, especially for vulnerable children</p> | <p><b>Support Families to Navigate the System</b></p> <p><b>We will make childcare easier to understand by:</b></p> <p>Simplifying <b>information, advice and guidance</b> on entitlements</p> <p>Providing clear pathways to help families understand their options</p> <p>Supporting families to make confident decisions about <b>local childcare and early education choice</b></p> |
|---|---|---|---|

### BSiL Key Theme 3: Improving Quality in Early Years, Including Reception

High quality early education is critical for children’s learning, development and long -term outcomes. Every parent should be able to expect consistently high quality care and education across early years settings and primary schools. Through this plan, the LA and partners will strengthen our shared commitment to evidence informed practice, workforce development and targeted improvement activity across North Yorkshire. **This theme is delivered through three core areas of action.**

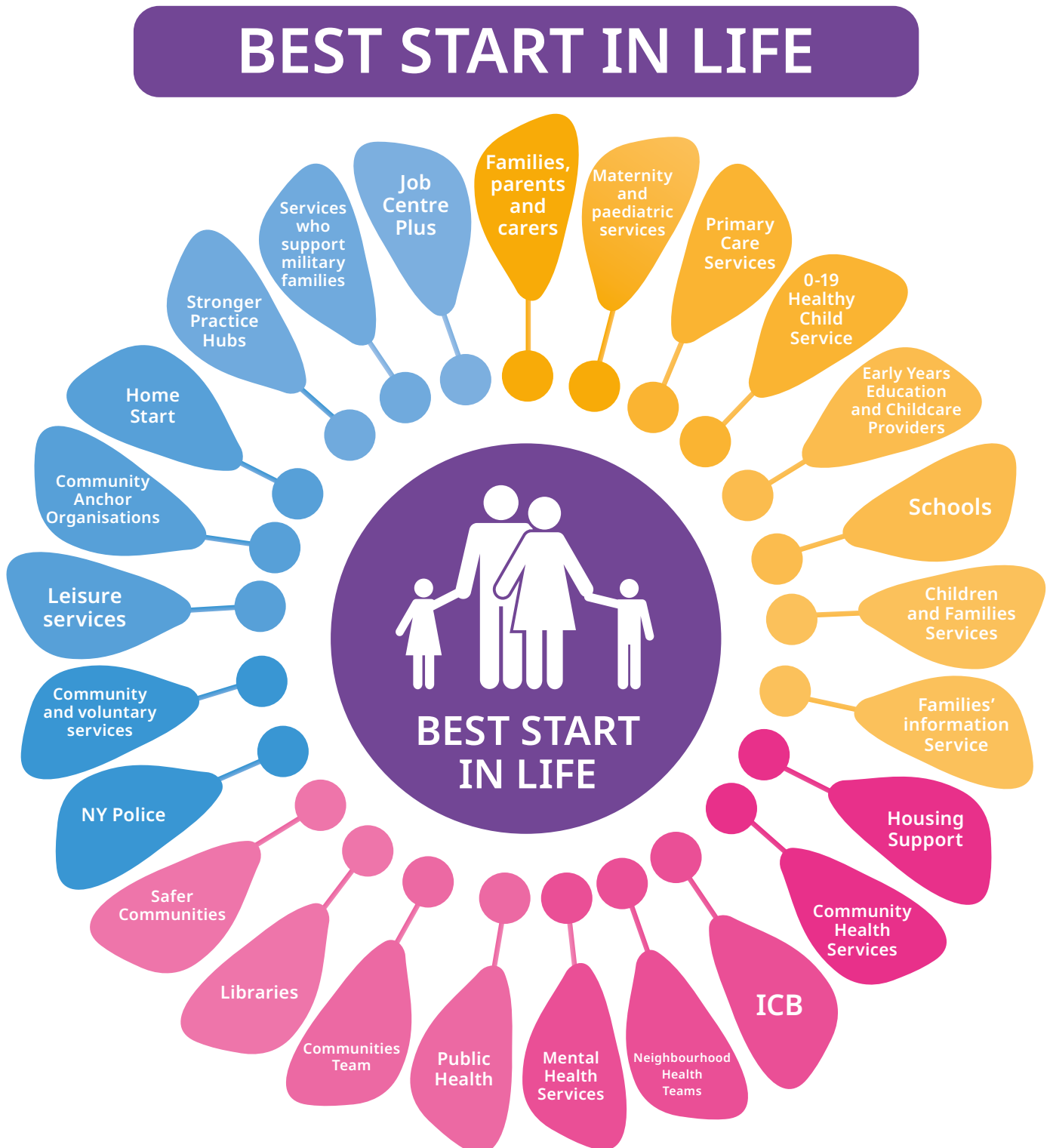
| <b>Strengthening Evidence Informed Practice and Workforce Development</b>  | <b>Engaging with National Programmes and Improvement Initiatives</b>   | <b>Enhancing Local Quality and Targeted Improvement Work</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed high quality, research informed training and professional development across the whole early years workforce, including reception classes</li> <li>Ensure practitioners have the skills, confidence and tools to deliver excellent early education</li> <li>Promote consistent use of evidence- based pedagogies, assessment and curriculum approaches</li> <li>Build a culture of reflective practice, peer support and continuous professional learning</li> </ul> | <p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully participate in national quality improvement programmes that strengthen early years and reception practice</li> <li>Ensure North Yorkshire practitioners benefit from the latest evidence, tools and guidance emerging nationally</li> <li>Align local improvement priorities with developing national reforms to maximise impact and sustainability</li> <li>Share learning across the system so that improvements achieved in one area translate into county wide practice gains</li> <li>We will work with Early Years Childcare and Education settings and the community to Engage in the National Year of Reading encouraging early reading</li> </ul> | <p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on the strong foundation of the Early Years Stronger Practice Hub and existing local expertise</li> <li>Continue targeted work to improve outcomes, including the Good Level of Development (GLD)</li> <li>Identify and reduce variation in quality across settings and localities</li> <li>Provide targeted support where challenges are identified, ensuring children receive consistent, high quality provision everywhere in North Yorkshire</li> </ul> |

# 5. Key areas of action

## BSiL Strand 1 BETTER SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

### Who is in the Best Start Family Hub network?

Due to the large geographical area of North Yorkshire, partnership working will be essential, aligning with identified key partners as described below.



## Priority 1 – Develop the Best Start Family Hub Network (Sites)

**What the Local Authority and partners will do** - We will establish a networked model of Best Start Family Hubs that provides simple, welcoming entry points to support in places families already go – schools, libraries, and community venues – supported by clear referral pathways.

### Our commitments:

#### Launch the first Best Start Family Hub (2026):

Scarborough Library will be North Yorkshire’s first Best Start Family Hub, building on our **Grow and Learn** model so families receive information and support from the earliest opportunity.

#### Offer multi disciplinary help, in one place:

Hubs will host and/or provide direct access to **Early Help, Speech & Language, SEND, Portage and Health services**. Where practitioners are not on site, **clear referral pathways** will ensure timely access.

#### Strengthen early language support:

Extend Early Help “**catch up**” **language groups**, with Speech and Language Therapists focusing on children needing specialist input, while others receive **evidence-based, parent inclusive support** to close early gaps.

#### Embed specialist SEND help:

Use existing **SEND Hubs** to provide an “**Experts at Hand**” referral offer and **open drop- ins** for early years settings seeking advice, inclusion guidance, and practical solutions.

#### Invest in sites and experience:

Enhance the **physical environment, session offer** and **welcome** so hubs are trusted, inclusive spaces that families choose to use.

#### Grow a mixed model network of accessible entry points:

Not every area will have a single physical hub. We will use **existing community assets** to build access, including:

- The **25 Community Anchor Organisations**
- **Early Years and school-based delivery points**
- outreach via **Community Connector** roles, and the **Mobile Library** service

This ensures coverage across rural, coastal and urban communities.

#### Measures of success:

- First Best Start Family Hub **operational in 2026** with access to multidisciplinary sessions and referral pathways
- Growth in **number of accessible entry points** and outreach sessions
- Increased **family satisfaction** with ease of access and “no wrong door” experience
- Increased **participation** in early language groups and SEND advice drop- ins

## Priority 2 – Empower Parents to Enhance Their Child’s Learning

**What the Local Authority and partners will do** - We will empower parents and carers with practical skills, confidence and clear pathways – rooted in the **Children and Families Strength in Relationships Practice Model** – so they can support their child’s learning, development and wellbeing from pregnancy onwards.

### Our commitment

#### Provide a clear, accessible offer:

Through the **Best Start Family Hub and Offer**, parents will access **universal and targeted support** directly, digitally or by referral.

#### Home Learning Environment (HLE) programmes:

Deliver **evidence informed HLE programmes**, including **Easy Peasy**, focused on **early language, communication and pre literacy** through practical, play-based activities that fit into daily routines.

- **Increasing awareness:** Via **Early Help, Health Visiting, Early Years settings**, local data and proactive outreach (pop ups in hubs/libraries, direct invitations)
- **Access:** Flexible formats (group, 1:1, digital) to reduce barriers and sustain engagement

#### Parenting programmes:

Offer a range of **evidence-based programmes**, including **Togetherness** (secure attachment) and **Triple P – Family Transitions** (for separation/significant change), via **groups and 1:1**.

- **Identification & outreach:** Early Help, Health Visiting, schools and community partners, with proactive recruitment and **stigma reduction** approaches
- **Delivery:** Varied times and **community venues** to maximise accessibility

#### Enhanced Portage:

Increase the **reach** of Portage, including **group sessions**, so more families access early years support for children with additional needs.

#### Perinatal and beyond – mental health gateway:

Position hubs as an **easy access** to perinatal mental health support with effective **sign posting and referral** from peer support to specialist help. Train staff to **identify and support** women, partners and dads early – services will **“lean in”** to back the workforce and families.

#### Early Language Development & SLCN pathway (0–5):

Implement a **clear Speech, Language and Communication Needs pathway**:

- **Antenatal** messaging on the importance of early language
- **Postnatal** sign posting to groups (music, singing, reading, early language building blocks)
- **Screening tools** used consistently across agencies
- **Routes to “catch up” groups and evidence-based interventions** with clear thresholds for specialist referral

Provide digital alternatives (e.g., **Easy Peasy** and other trusted resources) for families unable to attend face-to-face.

### Partners and Dads matter:

Ensure the Best Start offer is **equally accessible to partners and dads**, supporting a **whole family network** approach.

### Infant feeding support:

Link existing **in-person and digital/virtual** infant feeding support (libraries, home visiting, community settings) clearly into the **Best Start Family Hub offer**.

### Measures of success:

- Increased **HLE and parenting programme enrolment and completion**
- Improved **parent reported confidence** in supporting communication and early learning
- Increased **father/partner participation** across the offer
- More children accessing **timely SLCN support** (universal > targeted > specialist)

## Priority 3 – Early Identification and Easy Access to the Offer (Digital Front Door)

### What the Local Authority and partners will do

We will create a **coherent, user-friendly digital front door** that connects families to local and national support – while ensuring **digital inclusion** and offline alternatives.

### Our commitments:

#### Develop a Best Start platform:

Build a **public-facing Best Start in Life platform** that brings together high quality **HLE and parenting resources**, with the **Families Information Service** embedded to support funded early education and childcare applications, and **links to the national BSIL website**.

#### Align local digital offers:

Ensure interoperability and clarity with existing offers, including the **SEND Local Offer** and the **0–19 Growing Healthy App**, so families experience **multiple, connected access routes** rather than a single gate.

#### Track the national digital landscape:

Prepare to link with the **national Best Start digital parenting hub** and **‘My Children’ in the NHS App** (digital Red Book replacement), including potential features such as **childcare eligibility checking** and safe use of **AI-enabled guidance**.

#### Design for inclusion:

Offer **offline alternatives** and support for families who are digitally excluded (assisted access in hubs/libraries, printed guides, helplines).

#### Measures of success:

- Growth in **unique users, time to find the right help** reduced
- Increased **eligibility checks completed** and **successful funding applications**
- Positive user feedback on **clarity and accessibility**; offline routes in place and used

## BSiL Strand 2 – More Accessible Early Education and Childcare

### Priority 1 – Promote Early Learning for 2 Year Olds (Targeted Entitlement)

**Target: Increase uptake from 72.3% to a minimum of 81.5% across North Yorkshire.**

We will achieve this by:

- **Clear communications and outreach:** Develop varied **routes and methods** to reach families and professionals (hubs, health, settings, community partners, digital)
- **Train the workforce and volunteers:** Ensure key staff and volunteers **understand and can promote** the offer confidently
- **Early identification & pathways:** Improve **early identification of eligible families** and streamline **referral/application** processes
- **Follow-up on non-take-up:** Proactively **contact families** who do not access the entitlement, explore barriers, and provide **HLE, parenting and community-based support**
- **Coordinated local action:** **Families Information Service** and **Sufficiency Officers** will work with local professionals to **encourage take-up** and remove barriers

#### Measures of success:

- Uptake of Early Learning for 2 year olds > **81.5%** overall, with **narrowing gaps** in priority localities and groups
- Increased **awareness** and **successful applications** recorded via FIS/NYES

### Priority 2 - Improve Quality and Inclusion

We will:

- Increase **informal drop-ins** for settings and **network meetings** to share practice
- Provide **enhanced information and guidance** on inclusive practice
- Develop an **inclusive training offer** for all staff that explains the **breadth of the local system** and how to navigate it

#### Measures of success:

- More settings confidently **admitting and supporting** children with SEND
- Reduced time from **concern > support**; improved **family satisfaction** with inclusion

## Priority 3 - Increase Integrated Reviews (Joined Up 2 Year Checks)

We will:

- Undertake **workforce modelling** to ensure capacity for **joined-up reviews**
- **Increase the number of integrated 2-year reviews** (Healthy Child Programme + Early Years Progress Check) in target areas

### Measures of success:

- Higher **coverage** of integrated 2 year reviews
- Improved **identification** and **follow through** to targeted interventions

## Priority 4 - Ensure Sufficient, Accessible Places

We will:

- Use detailed **supply–demand mapping** to ensure the **right provision in the right place**
- **Identify gaps** and develop solutions to improve access for children living in **disadvantaged areas**
- **Maximise take-up** of funded **3 and 4 year old** places
- Ensure all providers **promote** available **funding streams** to families (e.g., 2 year funding, 3 and 4 year entitlements)
- Ensure providers **understand and access** their own funding options (e.g., **Tax Free Childcare, Disability Access Funding**)
- **Create one combined School-Age Childcare programme** by bringing together **HAF, free breakfast clubs, wraparound (term time) and holiday club** offers

### Measures of success:

- Fewer **sufficiency gaps** (by locality, age, SEND)
- Increased **occupancy** and **funded place take-up**
- Greater **parental awareness** of options and entitlements

## Priority 5 - Using Data to Target Action

We will use **current uptake data** and the **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)** to prioritise localities, target outreach, commission where needed, and track impact across the lifetime of this plan.



## BSiL Strand 3 – Improving Quality in Early Years, Including Reception

### Priority 1 – Strengthening Support for Children with Additional Needs and Vulnerable Learners

#### What the Local Authority and partners will do

North Yorkshire's 2025 Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes show clear areas for improvement, particularly in **literacy, mathematics**, and the prime area of **communication and language**. To accelerate progress and reach the **2028 GLD target of 80%**, the LA and partners will deliver a targeted and evidence informed programme of improvement across Early Years and Reception.

**Early Identification and Targeted Intervention** - We will strengthen early identification and targeted support across settings to ensure children with additional needs or vulnerabilities receive the right help as early as possible. An enabler of this will be to build on the success of Dingley's Promise Inclusion Project which has reached 1165 Early Years Practitioners to date which equates to greater than 65% of the Early Years Workforce.

**GLD Targeted Improvement Programme** - To improve outcomes in North Yorkshire's lowest performing learning goals, we are implementing a three year , targeted intervention programme for schools whose GLD results are consistently below the national average.

Our focus areas are:

- **Literacy:** Writing, word reading and comprehension  
Underpinned by Listening, Attention and Understanding
- **Mathematics:** Number and numerical patterns  
Again underpinned by Listening, Attention and Understanding

These two integrated EYFS Pedagogy and Practice projects aim to **raise standards across the six areas of learning** by embedding a **communication rich, whole school approach** rooted in early language development.

#### High Quality Pedagogy, Practice and Professional Support

The projects are grounded in **evidence-based practice**, supported through:

- Structured training for all Reception practitioners
- Coaching and modelling from LA Early Years (EYFS) advisers
- A phased approach using the **EEF's four stage implementation model:**  
**Explore > Prepare > Deliver > Sustain**
- Regular electronic resources containing evidence-based guidance
- Face-to -face professional development drawing on recognised national approaches
- Close alignment with **English and Maths Hubs**, ensuring consistency with national policy and best practice

This approach ensures that pedagogy, classroom practice and leadership are strengthened in tandem.

## Prioritising Vulnerable Learners and those experiencing disadvantage.

Children experiencing disadvantage and those with the greatest need will be prioritised through clear eligibility criteria. Schools automatically accessing the **full targeted programme** include:

- Those in the **highest deprivation areas** (IMD deciles 1-3)
- Infant and primary schools with:
  - **GLD below 74.2%** in 2025 (with cohorts >9 pupils), or
  - **A three year pupil level average GLD below 74.2%**

These criteria ensure that support is focused where it will have the **greatest impact** and where children are most at risk of falling behind.

**Tracking Progress and Ambition** - To support progress towards the national target of **80% GLD by 2028**, a **flight path** has been developed. This sets out:

- Year-on-year milestones
- Expected improvements in literacy, mathematics and communication
- How progress will be monitored across schools and localities
- How additional support will be deployed where progress is off track

This stepped approach ensures transparent monitoring and a consistent trajectory towards improved early outcomes.

## North Yorkshire Council GLD Flightpath 2025-2028



## Tracking Progress and Strengthening Assessment Practice

Progress towards the GLD milestones will be **monitored systematically** to assess the impact of interventions and ensure the Council remains on track to meet the **2028 GLD target of 80%**. Data will be used to identify where additional support is needed and to ensure improvement activity remains targeted and effective.

## Moderation and Strengthening Assessment Consistency

High quality and consistent assessment is essential for understanding children’s progress and identifying where further support is needed. To ensure EYFSP assessments are accurate and reliable across North Yorkshire, the Local Authority will:

- Deliver **six countywide moderation events** each year, supporting schools to make secure, consistent EYFSP judgments
- Focus moderation activity particularly on **communication and language, literacy and mathematics**, where variability in assessment has the greatest impact on GLD
- Provide schools with up-to - date guidance, exemplification materials, and professional dialogue to sharpen assessment practice
- Evaluate the impact of moderation by monitoring **participation levels** and analysing **trends in GLD outcomes** over time within participating schools

This approach will strengthen accuracy, build professional confidence, and support consistency across all Early Learning Goals.

## Priority 2 – High Quality Early Years Education and Childcare

### What the Local Authority and partners will do

We will ensure that early years settings across North Yorkshire are supported to deliver **high quality learning and play**, underpinned by clear communication, robust guidance and responsive Local Authority support.

### Clear, Timely Information and Sector Feedback

We will ensure early years providers receive information that is:

- **Clear, concise and timely**, supporting confident decision making
- Based on intelligence from **Ofsted**, sector feedback, childcare market monitoring, national initiatives and professional networks

This will help providers remain informed, responsive and aligned with best practice.

### Support Through Information, Guidance and Professional Tools

The Local Authority will provide:

- High quality **information, advice and guidance**
- Use **school admissions** and **patterns of absence** as opportunities to provide advice and support
- Locally developed **guidance documents**
- **Audit tools**, including safeguarding and business support tools
- **Online training** and CPD tailored to local need
- Access to **free safeguarding training** through the NYSCP website
- Newly developed **Early Years Safeguarding Masterclasses** to strengthen confidence and practice

This comprehensive support offer will enable settings to deliver safe, nurturing and effective early years provision.

## Stronger Practice Hubs

We will work closely with our identified **Stronger Practice Hub** to strengthen workforce skills and confidence. This partnership will:

- Provide opportunities for professional learning and peer support
- Help practitioners build skills in **empowering parents** to support home learning
- Support the scaling of evidence-based practice across the county

## Healthy Early Years Award

To promote healthy, thriving learning environments, we will:

- Increase uptake of the **North Yorkshire Healthy Early Years Award**, with a focus on target areas
- Support settings to build portfolios of evidence across key themes:
  - **Active lives**
  - **Healthy food**
  - **Emotional health and wellbeing**
  - **Staff wellbeing**
- Introduce a new **Best Start in Life theme** within the award framework

This will help embed high quality health and wellbeing practice across all early years settings.



# 6. Sustainability – Scaling and Embedding Effective Practice

## Building a sustainable Best Start in Life offer

The LA and partners are committed to creating a **long-term, sustainable system** of early years support. To achieve this, we will:

- **Review the plan every six months** and republish annually
- Remain flexible in implementation, adapting and discontinuing activity that is not having the intended impact
- Continue to evolve the offer between **2026 and 2029** in response to evidence and feedback
- Build sustainability through:
  - A skilled and confident **children’s workforce**
  - Embedding effective and consistent practice across the system
  - Maximising use of **community assets**
  - Strengthening partnerships across health, education and community services

By 2029, the ambition is to have a fully embedded, sustainable **Best Start in Life Offer** across North Yorkshire.

## Key Outcomes – How We Will Measure Success

Progress will be assessed through a set of measurable outcomes:

- **Confident parents** – increased access to and completion of parenting and HLE programmes
- **Improved access to books** and library engagement, including participation in Grow and Learn
- **Increased uptake** of funded early education and childcare places
- Stronger **school readiness measures** (Integrated 2 – 2.5 year review and ELIM outcomes)
- Improved **GLD outcomes**, including for children eligible for Free School Meals
- Increased uptake of **Free School Meals**
- **Reduction in Early Years children entering care**
- Increased **early identification of children with SEND**

These outcomes will demonstrate the effectiveness of the Best Start in Life Plan and its impact on children, families and communities across North Yorkshire

*\*As further guidance is published any national data and reporting requirements will be added*

# Appendix 1

## Existing plans and strategies that show partnership commitment to Best Start

**Joint Local Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2030** the “importance of a good start in life” as one of its central priorities. It emphasizes reducing health inequalities stemming from early childhood and shaping long-term wellbeing through early intervention

**Being Young in North Yorkshire 2025–2028** this strategy aligns closely with the best start principles by prioritizing children’s health, safety, and early development

**Humber & North Yorkshire Integrated Care System (Start Well)** This integrated strategy emphasises ensuring “every child to have the best start in life”, backed by a dedicated Start Well Board across the region.

**Early Help Strategy.** It is the embodiment of our joint will as Partners to ensure that we work in a co-ordinated way as early as possible when children and families need our joint support and help

**Working parent entitlement - North Yorkshire Council**  
Childcare expansion and quality settings

**Wraparound Childcare Page – Children & Families** integration with wraparound and childcare offer essential

**Public Health Overview: Partnership Website** Marmot’s principles, pinpointing “give every child the best start in life” as the first of six action goals to reduce health inequalities across the county is embedded in local team plans.

**Families First Partnership - Government** delivery expectations of safeguarding partners to implement reforms to Family Help, multi-agency child protection and Family Group Decision making