

**Oldham Borough Council
Record of Decision**

1. **TITLE:** Approval to Fund 12-Month Health Visitor Capacity to Strengthen Engagement and Outcomes for Families

2. **SERVICE AREA:** Children's Services

3. **PURPOSE OF DECISION**

1. In March 2025, approval was sought and gained from Cabinet to receive funding from Department of Education and Department of Health & Social Care to deliver the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme. Approval was also sought and gained to delegate authority to agree all spending decisions related to the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme to the Directors of Education, Skills and Early Years and Public Health after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People and noting the role of the Family Hub Board

4. **DECISION MADE BY:** Executive Director Children and Young People (Director of Children's Services)

5. **DECISION:**

RESOLVED – That the creation of a 0.6 FTE Health Visitor post for a 12-month period, housed within the Northern Care Alliance, be approved.

6. **REASON FOR DECISION**

As part of Oldham's commitment to improving outcomes for children and families, breastfeeding is recognised as a cornerstone of early development and maternal wellbeing. Evidence shows that breastfeeding delivers both immediate and long-term health benefits for mother and child, fostering emotional attachment and strengthening family bonds. It also plays a critical role in reducing health inequalities, with recent studies confirming that breastfeeding can lower the likelihood of childhood obesity by up to 25%. This emphasis on breastfeeding supports Oldham's wider ambition to embed preventative approaches, promote equity, and ensure every child has the best start in life. The additional 0.6 FTE Health Visitor capacity will strengthen our reach, ensuring consistent breastfeeding support and messaging is embedded across more families in our communities. This post will also form an important addition to the establishment of the NCA element of the Integrated Children & Families Service, further enhancing our collective ability to deliver coherent, joined-up early years support.

7. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

Option 1 (preferred Option): to proceed with establishing this post would significantly enhance our reach with families, strengthen opportunities for engagement, and ensure consistent delivery of key breastfeeding messages. It would also improve pathways and connections into wider early years services. This approach directly aligns with the national focus on prevention, reducing inequalities, and giving every child the Best Start in Life. For these reasons, this option is recommended.

Option 2: to not proceed with the establishment of the post, would limit the reach with families and reduce opportunities for engagement, the receiving of key breastfeeding messaging, and links into wider early years services. This risks that services being less



responsive to local needs, particularly among underrepresented groups. Given that enhanced breastfeeding support is a core expectation within the national Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, and is key to improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities, this option is not recommended

8. INTERESTS AND NATURE OF INTERESTS DECLARED

None

9. PRINCIPAL GROUPS CONSULTED: Not applicable.

10. DOCUMENT CONSIDERED: Approval to Fund 12-Month Health Visitor Capacity to Strengthen Engagement and Outcomes for Families