

## Report to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board

# Start for Life and Family Hub Progress Report

### **Portfolio Holder:**

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member Children and Young People

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**4 June 2024**

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### **For information**

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an updated position on the progress in implementing Oldham's Start for Life and Family Hub transformation programme and next steps in the ongoing development and long-term sustainability planning.

### **Executive Summary**

Through the £3,648,000 investment, family hubs and the Start for Life programme in Oldham will include high quality services in the period from conception to age 2, such as midwifery and health visiting, together with parenting support to help to make the transition to parenthood as smooth as possible, meaning that more children are healthy and ready to learn at age 2 and ready for school at age 5.

Delivery of the programme will contribute to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children and families across Oldham by ensuring that support provided is communicated to all parents and carers, including those who are hardest to reach and/or most in need of it.

Considerable progress has been made in the development and delivery of Oldham's Start for Life and Family Hub programme during the first two years of the programme. This achievement sits alongside wider support for families including the 0-10 Integrated Right Start and School Nursing Service, the Supporting Families and Holiday Activity Fund (HAF), Placed Based Integration and the VCFSE sector.

Parent's and carers voices are at the heart of Oldham's programme development. As well as collecting feedback from partners and stakeholders a Parent Carer Panel approach has been developed to help design the family Hubs and Start for Life Programme. Focus groups and forums

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have meet over the duration of the programme and we have heard from a range of voices including fathers, new parents and parents from ethnic minority communities.

The priority areas for the first two years of the programme have been to:

- create welcoming Family Hub spaces for families to access Start for Life services
- ensure the Family Hubs and the Start for Life programme delivers rapid, visible support for families in communities,
- develop a digital and virtual offer to give parents and professionals access to information and support when they need it 24/7.

The priority areas for the final year of the programme are:

- developing systems to better collect and analyse data and information alongside other outcomes frameworks i.e. Supporting Families
- evaluating and identify best practice to understand what works for families
- working with Oldham's schools and Multi Academy Trusts to develop a community offer
- engagement with key strategic partners to inform Oldham's sustainability and legacy planning for life beyond the funded programme which ends on the 31 March 2025.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board:

- note the update and progress made in delivery of the Family Hub and Start for Life programme
- recognise and support the need for effective sustainability planning for beyond the life of the funded programme which ends on the 31 March 2025

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## Start for Life and Family Hub Progress Report

### 1 Background

- 1.1 In April 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that Oldham was one of 75 upper tier local authorities due to receive government funding to deliver Start for Life and Family Hub services over the fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25. Oldham received £3,648,000 capital and revenue funding to create a network of Family Hubs. Funding is received upon demonstrable progress against the key milestones and effective delivery of the minimum expectations set down in guidance.
- 1.2 The Start for Life & Family Hubs model is founded on the principle of services being more accessible, better connected, and more relationship centered. The programme aims to make a positive difference to parents, carers, and their children by providing a mix of physical and virtual spaces, as well as outreach, where families can easily access non-judgmental support for the challenges they may be facing. The programme aims to join up support for parents and carers by integrating services across health (physical and mental health) and social care as well as voluntary and community organisations and education settings.
- 1.3 The DfE has set out the core services that it expects to be delivered through Family Hubs.
- Activities for children aged 0-5
  - Birth registration
  - Debt and welfare advice
  - Domestic abuse support
  - Early language and the home learning environment
  - Early childhood education and care and financial support (Tax free childcare, Universal credit childcare)
  - Health visiting
  - Housing support
  - Infant feeding support
  - Intensive targeted family support services
  - LA 0-19 Public Health Services
  - Mental health services
  - Midwifery / maternity
  - Nutrition and weight management
  - Oral health improvement
  - Parent-infant relationships and Perinatal mental health support
  - Parenting support
  - Reducing Parental conflict
  - SEND support
  - Stop smoking support
  - Substance (alcohol/drug) misuse support
  - Support for separating and separated parents
  - Youth Justice services
  - Youth services – universal targeted

This is not an exhaustive list, so Local Authorities can choose to deliver additional services.

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1.4 Services are expected to be available to families in the following ways:

- Face to face at a family hub
- Through a family hub but received elsewhere in the network (for example via outreach, at a youth centre, a clinical setting such as a health centre, a voluntary and community sector organization or a faith setting).
- Virtually, through the family hub, including static online information and/or interactive virtual services.

## 2 Current Position

2.1 Considerable progress has been made in the development and delivery of Oldham's Start for Life and Family Hub programme during the first two years of the programme. This achievement sits alongside wider support for families including the 0-10 Integrated Right Start and School Nursing Service, the Supporting Families and Holiday Activity Fund (HAF), Placed Based Integration and the VCFSE sector.

2.2 Our ambition is for Family Hubs to provide a universal offer for all families based on the following principles:

- *A partnership model with local communities which families want to access. Uniting multiple parts of the public sector*
- Every family in Oldham should receive the *support they need, when they need it* delivered through trusting and supportive relationships.
- All families in Oldham should have *access to the information and tools* they need to care for and *interact positively* with their babies and children, and to look after their own *health & wellbeing*.
- *Family Hubs* in Oldham will *become the way we plan and deliver family services* in our 5 districts through a *dispersed delivery approach* (hub buildings, virtual offers and outreach)
- They will *provide family early support & help* from pregnancy, through a child's early years, later childhood and up to the age of 19 (or up to age 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities) by *increasing access to a range of services through a single point of access*.

2.3 Capital funding has been utilised to refurbish and rebrand six existing Children's Centres as Family Hubs. New branding will feature on signage, online and promotional materials:

- Beaver Hub launched in July 2023 (central district)
- Stanley Road Hub launched in March 2024 (west district)
- Medlock Vale Hub launched 6 June 2024 (east district)
- Shaw Hub open with formal launched planned 12 June (north district)
- Spring Meadows Hub open with formal launch planned 25 June 2024 (south district)
- Alexandra Hub open. Refurbishment work due to commence 17 June 2024 (central district)
- Oldham Library Hub will enhance existing access to information, help and support for families from across the borough.

2.4 The Family Hub sites support co-location of a multi-agency core team that includes early years practitioners, health visiting and school nursing. All have a clinical space for midwifery services to deliver anti-natal and post-natal care, and this space could be utilised for other health services. The Early Attachment Service is based at Spring Meadows Family Hub

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2.5 Strong links have been established with health providers Northern Care Alliance and Pennine Care and the VCFSE sector, and their services have been commissioned to deliver aspects of the programme.

2.6 Task groups are driving forward implementation plans for each of the key programme strands, and excellent progress has been made against the milestones set. Details of activity against the key strands, infant feeding, perinatal and infant mental health and parent infant relationships (PIMHs), support for early language through the home learning environment, parenting support and publishing the Family Hub and Start for Life offer are set out in appendix 1. Evidence of activity delivered and impact on families around two specific interventions are set out in Appendix 2 and 3.

### 3 **Next Steps**

3.1 A sustainability and legacy workshop took place in May 2024. Attendees included representatives from the DfE, health and education commissioners, senior managers and practitioners from across the local authority, health and the VCFSE sector. Learning is already being used to inform focussed discussions with key partners prior to developing a sustainability and legacy plan.

3.2 We aim to develop the outreach offer utilising community assets such as schools, libraries and Town Halls.

3.3 The next stage in the development of the Parent Carer Panel is to bring together parent and carer panels from across various partnership groups i.e. PBI teams to share good practice, expertise and to develop a collaborative approach utilizing the new Engagement Platform.

3.4 As a priority we will develop an outcomes and performance framework to evidence the impact of the programme. This will profile programme activity against the Supporting Families outcomes framework. This will enable us to better understand the needs of children, young people and their families.

### 4 **Monitoring and Evaluation**

4.1 The DfE monitor progress of Oldham's transformation delivery plan. The monitoring includes submission of quantitative data on implementation and metrics identified by the DfE for the duration of the programme.

4.2 Governance is provided through a new Start for Life & Family Hubs Strategic Partnership, chaired by the Director of Education, Early Years and Skills. The Partnership brings together a cross section of operational, strategic and senior leaders from across the LA, health and VCFSE sectors. The partnership provides direction for the development, coordination and delivery of the programme. It is accountable to the Children and Families Early Help Strategic Board. Progress is reported through regular highlight reports.

### 5 **Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board:

- note the update and progress made in delivery of the Family Hub and Start for Life programme
- recognise and support the need for effective sustainability planning for beyond the life of the funded programme which ends on the 31 March 2025


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6      **Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Family Hub and Start for Life Achievements Year 1-2**

**Appendix 2: Case Study Enhanced REAL**

**Appendix 3: Case study Family Hub Relationships**

Signed Cabinet Member (Cllr Shaid Mushtaq)  	Dated: Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
Signed _____ Executive Director/Deputy Chief Executive	Dated _____

## Appendix 1: Family Hub and Start for Life Achievements Year 1-2

Theme	Activity
<p>Infant Feeding (breastfeeding support)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding the successful UNICEF Baby Friendly accreditation for the 0-19 Right Start and School Nursing Service. This scheme sets best practice standards for each of the key funded strands in infant feeding and the parent-baby relationship.</li> <li>• The UNICEF Happy Baby leaflet has been purchased and is now distributed to families as part of the peer support offer. It is now in all Hubs for use with antenatal families as part of a meaningful conversation around breastfeeding and the importance of early relationships with parents and babies.</li> <li>• Parents can now access a range of information and support on <u>infant feeding</u> and <u>breastfeeding</u> through the new Family Hub website.</li> <li>• Breastfeeding training has been delivered to health visiting teams, Early Help staff, student nurses, student health visitors, student health and social care staff enabling them to have sensitive conversations. A virtual training session has been provided for GPs. To date, funding has enabled 174 staff to access breastfeeding training.</li> <li>• Homestart have been commissioned to deliver an enhanced infant peer support service. This includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access to 8 new volunteers</li> <li>○ Increased peer support face to face peer support during the post-natal period through drop ins and Baby Bistro's in 5 hubs.</li> <li>○ Breastfeeding equipment loan scheme.</li> <li>○ Delivery of virtual antenatal breastfeeding basics workshops</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Perinatal and Infant Mental Health and Parent Infant Relationships (PIMHs) Pregnancy – 2 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents now have 24/7 access to universal information and support on perinatal and infant mental health through the new Family Hub website</li> <li>• The <i>Your Baby and You</i> booklet has been purchased to support the universal pathway. Every family with a new birth over the next 2 years receives a copy of the booklet delivered by health visitors as part of the 6–12-week mandated health and development visit to ensure additional support with the contents.</li> <li>• Health visitors have received the evidenced based <u>Newborn Behavioural Observation</u> (NBO) training. This gives health visitors a tool and enhanced knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting parent-baby relationships.</li> <li>• PIMHs champion train the trainer course has been delivered to 5 staff including; mental health midwife, SALT therapists and play workers, health visitors and the therapeutic social worker. This will support sustainability of the PIMHS offer.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of the Early Attachment Service has been increased to give more direct support to referred families and to increase training. This better equips the workforce and enables delivery of new high-quality evidence-based approaches. These can be delivered digitally or via family support work and group programmes for families. The EAS service has been able to increase capacity and/or recruit to key posts (PIMHs family support worker, therapeutic social worker, speech and language therapist). This increased capacity has enabled more families to access support as the team are to offer more outreach by visiting families on the postnatal ward, baby bistro's etc</li> <li>• A mental health practitioner has been funded within NHS Oldham <u>Talking Therapies</u> service. This post supports lower level/ universal mental health support across FHs, baby clinics, etc.</li> <li>• A grant agreement is in place with the neonatal charity <i>Spoons</i> to support whole families, practically and emotionally from admission to the neonatal unit and beyond, in collaboration with NHS and other services. This enables proactive identification, targeting and support of newborn Intensive Care Unit families.</li> </ul>
Home Learning Environment/Early Language Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents can access information and support on home learning and speech development through the new Family Hub website, and an early language development leaflet will be available soon.</li> <li>• The Making it REAL (MIR) evidence based early literacy programme has been delivered to support home learning and improve outcomes for 3- and 4-year-olds. This has included training ten practitioners to deliver the training to support sustainability beyond the funded programme. Delivery has included:</li> <li>• MIR training accessed by 28 professionals from wider services including schools, settings and Family Hubs staff. 100% reported improved confidence in how to support families with their early literacy skills and home learning environment.</li> <li>• 12 parents received the Sharing REAL with Parents 4-week course. Each received activity booklets and book packs to support their HLE. 100% reported increased confidence in supporting their child at home. Some parents have progressed to volunteering in their child's school.</li> <li>• Since July 23, 41 targeted children have completed the MIR intervention. Of these, 65% reached the age-related expectation from below age-related expectations.</li> <li>• 140 targeted children are currently on track to complete the MIR intervention in July 2024. These children and families are receiving 1:1 home visits and literacy events to support the HLE. A total of 200 home visits have been completed and 30 literacy events have taken place since the start of the project. In total, over</li> </ul>



	<p>600 children and families have engaged in the MIR events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 2000 MIR parent booklets and activity guides have been shared with all partners involved in MIR projects. These include FHs, HomeStart, schools, EYs settings, POINT, libraries and parents/carers. An additional 1,000 books have been gifted to families.</li> <li>• Since September 23, 79 families (98 children including siblings) have completed the Play, Learn, Grow, 8-week course delivered by HomeStart.</li> <li>• Support for children with SEND has been expanded through extension of MIR intervention. Resource card &amp; packs have been created in partnership with POINT and shared with families. Regular SEND drop ins (2 per month) are now delivered in hubs by Oldham Parent Carer Forum to ensure families have access to POINT services, be signposted to additional support/services, understand what is available and how to access, as well as peer to peer support</li> <li>• Investment has secured the Early Years Better Communication Team which includes 2 speech and language therapists and a language development worker. The team deliver a comprehensive training and coaching programme for practitioners working in early years settings and schools.</li> </ul>
Parenting Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents can now access a range of universal information and support on parenting through the new Family Hub website. This includes information about face-to-face delivery, online parenting programmes such as Solihull online parenting courses, through Essential Parent digital library and the Chathealth text messaging service.</li> <li>• Funding has been utilised to create a new parenting team, consisting of 4 parenting officers and a parenting coordinator. The team are now delivering a new evidence-based parenting offer. The suite of parenting programmes will enhance our universal and targeted Early Help offer to parents across a wide range of subjects and covers parenting, child development, relationships, emotional wellbeing health etc.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Baby Bonding (24 wks Conception to 1yr)</li> <li>○ Triple P Baby (up to 12 months) Awaiting training April.</li> <li>○ Solihull Approach</li> <li>○ Triple P Discussion Groups (2-9yrs)</li> <li>○ Family Links Nurture Programme (2-13yrs)</li> <li>○ Youth Connect 5 (Parents of young people aged 9-16yrs)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Between November 2023 and March 2024, 59 families have accessed an evidence-based intervention and 69 families accessed peer support/social networking.</li> <li>• Funding has been utilised to strengthen the role of the local VCFSE sector in delivery of parenting support and programmes as part of the outreach offer. For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homestart has been commissioned to deliver a range of</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>peer support and social networking opportunities. This includes recruiting and delivering a Dad Matters peer support programme and a social networking coordinator. Activities include :<i>coffee and chat, walk and talk, With You in Mind (WYIM) sessions</i> are being held across the FH network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Positive Steps have been commissioned to lead and facilitate aspects of our Parent panel offer to ensure the voice of seldom heard communities is heard and is used to inform our offer</li> <li>● Action Together has been commissioned to provide a leadership role in relation to a number of community base projects including running a small community grant programme.</li> </ul>
<p>Family Hub &amp; Start for Life offer, including Parent Carer Panels</p>	<p>The digital and communication element of Family Hubs has progressed well. Funding has been used to increase capacity in the Communications and Research Team to work alongside the delivery teams and commissioned services to deliver key activities, including supporting launch event, social media, developing the website, and raising the profile of the programme in Oldham.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Oldham Family Hub website is live, giving an overview of the services and information available to families in supporting a child make the best start in life. Since its launch in July 2023 there have been 68,620 views and 16,895 users. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Through the website families can register to be part of our Parent panels, give feedback on Family Hub services and register to receive the new digital newsletter.</li> <li>○ Families and professionals are able to access a wide range of information, practical guidance and videos which are accessible on the new Family Hub website available 24/7.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 10,000 Family Hubs and Start for life leaflets have been printed as part of our new branding work and have been distributed to all new parents and residents via the Hubs, local events, VCFSE sector and staff working closely with residents.</li> <li>● Significant engagement activity has taken place during the programme to raise awareness of the start for life offer. This has included attending a range of meetings and networks with partners including Oldham Church Leaders, TOG Mind, Housing 21, Proud2Parent, First Choice Homes etc.</li> <li>● <u>Action Together</u> has also been commissioned to raise awareness of Family Hubs and the Start for Life offer with its members from the VCFSE, this includes hyper local grassroots, volunteer led community groups, right through to large charities who deliver commissioned services in the borough. This will include regularly sharing Family Hubs promotional materials.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Case Study Enhanced REAL

Type of intervention (tick all that apply)	Individual		Community	
	Group		Drop -in	
	Enhanced REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy)		Other	X
Age of Child/Young Person	Ages: 3 families, 3 children aged from 2-3 years			
Date	May 2024			

### Background:

Based on the original National Children's Bureau Making it REAL programme, REAL enhanced has been developed locally and piloted in 2023 as an intervention to support children who have or may have special educational needs and/or disability, which could have a long-term impact on their learning. REAL enhanced is particularly beneficial for children who have been highlighted with social communication difficulties. This intervention is to support children who are not attending an educational setting and provides the family with strategies to use in the home with their child.

REAL enhanced consists of six visits. The first visit is completed in the home with the family and the remaining five visits can either be in the home/family hub/external venue depending on the families preference and needs.

On completion, a 3-month review is completed to review the child's developmental journal with the family to assess progress and impact on family and child outcomes.

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## **Outcomes/ impact**

An expected outcome of this intervention is to increase parental confidence with how they are supporting their child and their development. By increasing parental confidence this encourages families to access the family hub and wider services. The Practitioner will engage with the family on a weekly basis and encourage them into their local family hub, for example to access play and stay sessions.

**Outcome:** All parents reported increased confidence in supporting their child's development.

**Parent and child 1:** reported that she didn't get out of the house much and that her child had not been to a play centre or play group before and is due to go to nursery in January. The parent's main concern is that her child isn't communicating or speaking. It was agreed that the sessions would be undertaken in a Family Hub and by the end of the 6-week intervention the parent and child were attending the regular play and stay sessions.

The parent reported that she was very happy to attend the REAL enhanced sessions as they were helpful, she was happy with her child's progress, and she will continue to attend the play and stay groups at Beaver Family Hub.

Evidence gathered through implementation of the intervention and graduated response resulted in a referral to the Childrens Paediatric Service.

### **Parent and child 2:**

During the intervention, the parents started to take their child to the local children's centre to access play and stay sessions.

The parent stated that she took her child to the park and that this is something that both mum and dad were previously scared of doing.

On the final session the parent reported that she was '*feels a bit better about school*'

Following the intervention child 2 received additional support from the 0-19 Right Start and School Nursing Service SEND practitioner.

### **Parent and child 3**

Following the intervention the parents reported that they were happy with their child's progress and are now more confident in taking their child out of the home to access trips in the community and were less anxious about their child starting at school.

The evidence provided through REAL enhanced has supported the submission for statutory assessment for some of the children who have required it.

### Appendix 3: Family Hub Relationships

Type of intervention (tick all that apply)	Individual		Community	
	Group	x	Drop -in	
	Peer support through social networking		Other	
Age of Child/Young Person	Age: Under 2			
Date	24/05/24			

**Background:**

- Single parent of a child under 2.
- Currently in temporary accommodation.
- Family relationship breakdown.
- Mental health issues.
- Limited family support

**Assessment / Identification of needs:**

Need for additional support identified through the child’s health and development review completed by the health visitor and through attendance at universal groups delivered by the 0-19 Right Start and School Nursing Service and Homestart at a Family Hub.

Needs identified include universal low level maternal mental health support, opportunities for peer support

The parent has accessed regular support through Homestart (telephone contact) 0-19 staff during play and stays (face to face).

The parent has also been supported to access the Food Bank

**Support accessed:**

- Baby Play – Beaver Family Hub
- Stay n Play – Beaver Family Hub
- Early Help drop-in for support regarding homelessness Beaver Family Hub
- Friends of Beaver Social Networking Session– Beaver Family Hub
- Walk and Talk sessions – Alexandra Park
- With You in Mind group – Central Library and Family Hub
- Support by Homestart staff to access support from The Crib.

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**Outcome/impact**

Effective relationship between staff within the 0-19 team and Homestart has enabled timely effective support to be provided for the child and parent/carer.

Strong relationships with individual staff have given the parent the confidence to access services across the Family Hub network i.e. Beever Family Hub, Oldham Library and Family Hub and Alexandra Park. This has enhanced the experiences for the parent and child and provides a level of consistency and stability during a time of instability and transition.

The relationships and support provided have enabled the parent navigate access to a range of services including additional family support through Homestart and a Therapeutic Counsellor.

**Voice of the Child / Parent / Carer views**

The parent appreciated all the help given and enjoys coming to the groups. She said, "I like seeing him happy. Everyone is welcoming."