

# Delegated Decision Report

Decision below £250k



<b>Subject:</b>	Approval to Fund 12-Month Health Visitor Capacity to Strengthen Engagement and Outcomes for Families
<b>Decision maker: Senior Officer</b>	Julie Daniels, Executive Director Children & Young People
<b>Decision date:</b>	2 December 2025
<b>Report author:</b>	Ryan Rothery – Family Hubs Programme Manager
<b>Ward (s):</b>	All

## 1. Reason for decision

- 1.1 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 at the value of approximately £1.38m for 2025/26. 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The report seeks approval to establish a 0.6 FTE Health Visitor post for a 12-month period, housed within the Northern Care Alliance, at a cost of £34,627. Funding will be taken from the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme budget, and the post will run until 31 March 2027.

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To approve the creation of a 0.6 FTE Health Visitor post for a 12-month period, housed within the Northern Care Alliance, at a cost of £34,627.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 A Cabinet report gained approval in March 2025 to accept the national funding to be spent across a number of areas in Oldham including the commissioning of provider services, capital investment, workforce development and evaluation. Within this report - agreement was sought and gained for delegated authority delegate authority to agree all spending decisions related to the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme to the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years and Director of Public Health after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People.
- 3.2 Family Hubs and Start for Life funding from DfE into Oldham is approx. £1.38m for 2025/26. This is the fourth year of funding as a national initiative which seeks to enhance and connect a range of services that support families at universal and targeted level in deprived local authorities.
- 3.3 This family hubs and start for life investment is split by thematic areas;
- Family Hubs Programme Spend
  - Family Hubs Capital Spend
  - Parenting Support
  - Home Learning Environment
  - Parent-Infant Relationships and Perinatal Mental Health
  - Infant feeding Support
  - Published Start for Life Offers and Parent Carers Panels
- 3.4 The establishment of a 0.6 FTE Health Visitor post for a 12-month period is a key mechanism within the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme. This dedicated capacity is designed to strengthen breastfeeding support and ensure that key messaging systematically reaches more families, thereby promoting attachment, improving health outcomes, and reducing inequalities across our communities.
- 3.5 Oldham continues to face persistent challenges in engaging families with early years services, particularly within ethnically diverse communities and areas of high deprivation. The establishment of this post is designed to address these barriers by extending breastfeeding support and ensuring key messaging reaches more families. This targeted capacity will create accessible opportunities for engagement, strengthen trust, and promote healthier starts for children across our communities.

#### 4. Alternative option(s) to be considered

4.1 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.

4.2 To not proceed with the establishment of this post would limit the reach with families and reduce opportunities for engagement, the receiving of key breastfeeding messaging, and links into other early years services. Given the national emphasis on prevention, equity, and the Best Start in Life, this option is not recommended.

#### 5. Consultation

5.1 The proposal to invest in infant/breastfeeding support is aligned with national Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme specifications.



5.2 Children’s Services Management Team have been consulted about the proposal.

#### 6. Risks

6.1 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 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.

#### 7. Implications

Financial	<p>This report seeks approval to establish a 0.6 FTE Health Visitor post for a 12-month period (1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027), to be hosted by the Northern Care Alliance, at a total cost of <b>£34,627</b>, inclusive of all on-costs.</p> <p>The cost of this post will be fully funded through the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme (FHSLP) grant and has been incorporated into the wider programme plan for FY2026/27.</p>
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	<p>Delivery under the FHSLP grant is subject to robust monitoring arrangements led by the Council, covering both service performance and financial compliance. Continued engagement with the Department for Education ensures that all activity remains within the agreed scope, delivery parameters, and financial frameworks throughout the programme period.</p> <p>The Local Authority has received confirmation of <b>Best Start and Family Hubs</b> grant allocations for the forthcoming financial years, as outlined below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="581 646 1339 850"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>FY2026/27</th> <th>FY2027/28</th> <th>FY2028/29</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Revenue</b></td> <td>1,819,400</td> <td>1,736,400</td> <td>1,774,100</td> <td><b>5,329,900</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Capital</b></td> <td>99,300</td> <td>101,200</td> <td>103,200</td> <td><b>303,700</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>1,918,700</b></td> <td><b>1,837,600</b></td> <td><b>1,877,300</b></td> <td><b>5,633,600</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="text-align: center;">   </div> <p>Oldham_December_November_2025_Bes 2024_Family_Hubs_at_Start_Family_Hubs_</p> <p>Vicki Hayes – Senior Accountant (16/3/2026)</p>		FY2026/27	FY2027/28	FY2028/29	Total	<b>Revenue</b>	1,819,400	1,736,400	1,774,100	<b>5,329,900</b>	<b>Capital</b>	99,300	101,200	103,200	<b>303,700</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,918,700</b>	<b>1,837,600</b>	<b>1,877,300</b>	<b>5,633,600</b>
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HR	<p>The request is to pay NCA to provide a Health Visitor to provide breastfeeding/Infant support aligned with national Family Hubs and Start for Life programme specifications.</p> <p>HR would advise that the service have involvement with NCA to ensure Job Spec/Job Description meets the needs of the service being provided.</p> <p>Service need to ensure oversight and accountability for service levels and behaviours aligned with organisational values and purpose of the grant.</p> <p>Jodie Rowson, Interim HR Advisor Date: 13.03.2026</p>																				
Legal	<p>Provided the Services complies with the Council’s Recruitment and Selection Policy and that that the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 are met, there is no legal impediment to this proposal. The Service should ensure it liaises with HR prior to the ending of this Fixed Term Contract.</p>																				

Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	The proposal has no negative impact for individuals with any protected characteristic. It offers positive benefits for mothers and babies.
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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No

Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

1. Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme – Cabinet paper




FAMILY HUBS FINAL  
REPORT.pdf

Appendix

1. None

Report author sign-off	Ryan Rothery
Role	Family Hubs Programme Manager
Date of sign-off	19.03.2026

<b>Approval</b>	
Officer approval sign-off	
Role	Julie Daniels – Executive Director of Children and Young People (DCS)
Date of sign-off	23 March 2026