

Public Report
Improving Lives Select Commission

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Lives Select Commission – 15 September 2026

Report Title

Family Hubs Performance Update

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nicola Curley, Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report provides an update on the performance of Rotherham's Family Hubs programme during 2025-26 and demonstrates its growing reach and impact across the borough. It highlights significant increases in family registrations and service attendance, with strong engagement from families living in deprived communities and from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The report shows positive outcomes across key areas including infant feeding, early years activities, parenting support, perinatal mental health services, and provision for older children and young people. It also evidences the programme's success in reaching families through both Family Hub sites and community-based outreach services.

Recommendations

The report recommends that Members note this positive performance and outlines plans to further strengthen data collection, performance monitoring and digital intelligence systems to better target support and improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Family Hubs Performance UpdateError! Reference source not found.

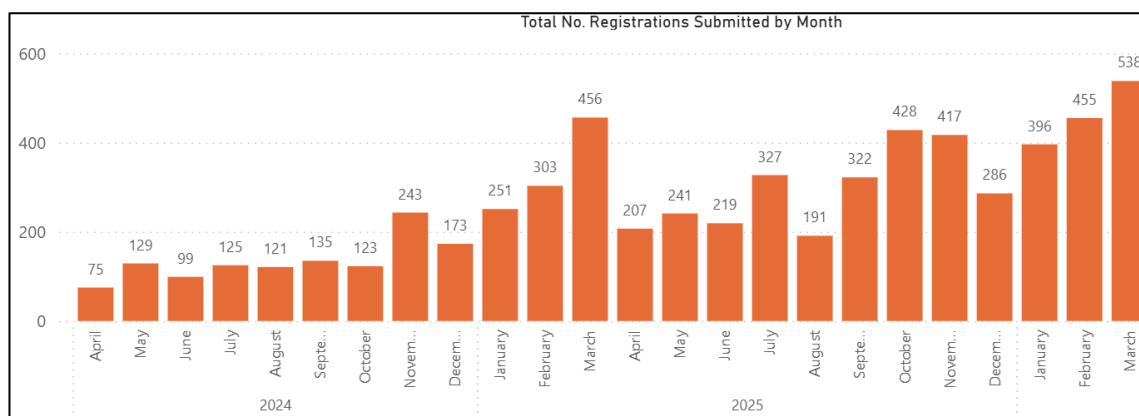
1. Background

- 1.1 Rotherham has been part of the national Family Hubs programme since 2022, having been selected as one of the first 75 local authorities to receive Family Hubs and Start for Life funding. Over the past four years, this investment has enabled the Council and its partners to strengthen integrated early help, family support and Start for Life services, improving access to support for children, young people and families and developing a more joined-up approach across services.
- 1.2 The Government has confirmed funding for the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme for the period April 2026 to March 2029, providing local authorities with the opportunity to build on existing foundations and further strengthen early intervention, healthy child development and family support services. This sustained investment moves the programme from a focus on transformation to embedding Family Hubs services and delivery within the core business of the Council and its partners.
- 1.3 The Family Hubs programme recognises that some families face barriers to accessing services and therefore must deliver flexible, community-led support that responds to local needs. As well as being delivered in Family Hubs buildings, many services are provided through outreach activity and from community venues across the borough, taking support directly into local communities.
- 1.4 Family Hubs Programme performance is routinely reviewed through the Family Hubs Operational Group and quarterly performance meetings, both of which are attended by partners from across the wider Family Hubs partnership. These arrangements provide oversight of programme delivery, support collective accountability and help identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement.
- 1.5 This briefing provides an update on the performance of the Family Hubs programme for 2025-26 and summarises key performance measures that demonstrate the reach and effectiveness of Family Hubs services across Rotherham.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Family Hubs Registrations

- 2.1.1 Registration with Family Hubs provides an important measure to enable the partnership to better understand demand, target resources effectively and identify groups who may be underrepresented.

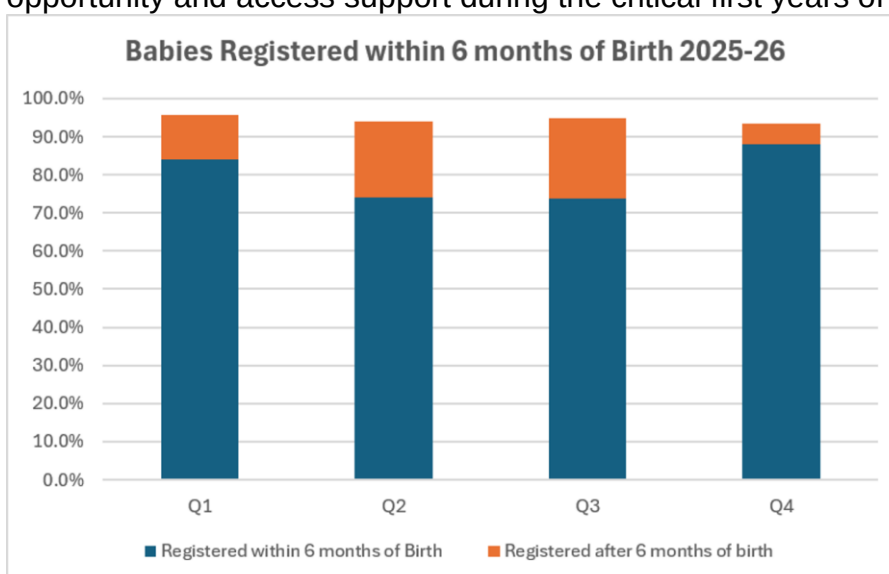


2.1.2 In 2025-26, Best Start Family Hubs registrations increased by over 80%, rising from 2,233 families in 2024-25 to 4,027 families. This significant growth reflects ongoing work to raise awareness of the Family Hubs programme and promote a positive understanding of the support available to children and families across Rotherham.

2.1.3 The increase has also been supported by efforts to simplify the registration process and reduce duplication for families. In particular, registration has been aligned with the distribution of Baby Packs, enabling families to share their information once and gain access to a range of Family Hubs services and support. This more streamlined approach has improved the customer experience while helping to increase registrations.

2.1.4 Furthermore, building on Rotherham's previous Children's Centre model, Family Hubs continue to achieve high levels of engagement with families. In 2025-26, 93.3% of children aged under five were registered with Family Hubs. This figure rises to 95.2% for children living in the 30% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs), demonstrating the programme's strong reach into communities where families are most likely to benefit from early help and support services.

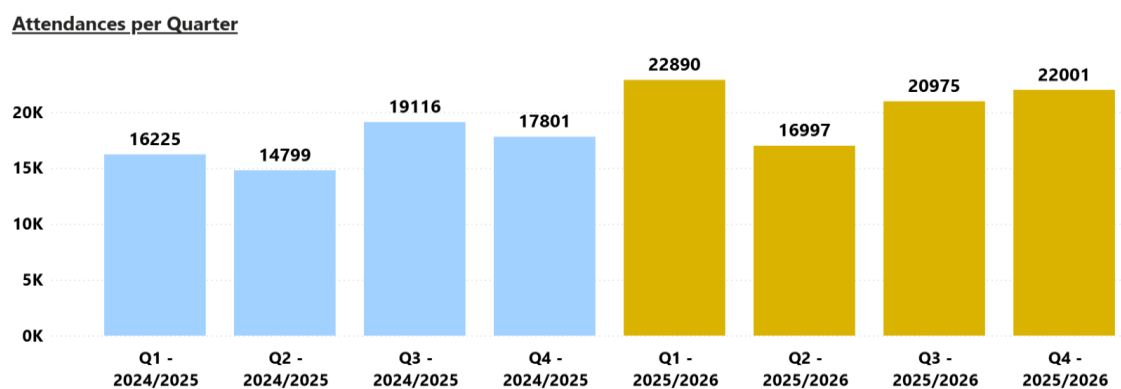
2.1.5 A key objective of the Family Hubs programme is to register babies within six months of birth, enabling families to engage with Family Hub services at the earliest opportunity and access support during the critical first years of a child's life.



- 2.1.6 Performance during 2025-26 demonstrates consistently strong early engagement. Across the four quarters, between 74% and 89% of babies were registered with Family Hubs within six months of birth. This reflects the continued commitment of partners to identify and engage families early, ensuring they are aware of and able to access the support available to them.
- 2.1.7 Alongside early registration activity, ongoing efforts are made to register babies after six months of age to ensure families who may have missed earlier opportunities are not excluded from support. This helps maximise the reach of Family Hubs services and strengthens connections with families who may benefit from additional assistance.
- 2.1.8 Whilst Family Hubs performance demonstrates significant growth in registrations and attendance, this has been a continued area of focus. Further work is required to strengthen the measurement of outcomes and impact for children, young people and families. As the programme evolves, there will be an increased focus on evidencing how being registered and attending Family Hub services supports improvements in school readiness, child development, parental confidence, family resilience and reductions in the need for statutory intervention. This will help demonstrate not only how many families are accessing support, but also the outcomes they achieve as a result.

2.2 Family Hubs Engagement and Reach

2.2.1 Attendances at Family Hubs services



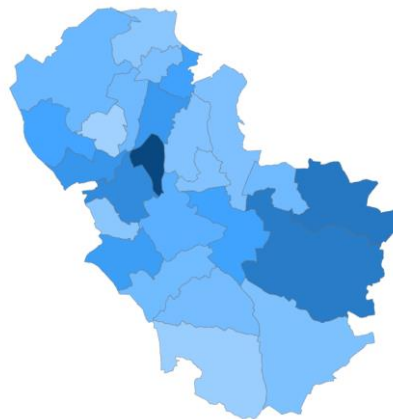
The data demonstrates a strong increase in engagement with Family Hub activities during 2025/26. Total attendances across Family Hubs, partner organisations and commissioned services rose from 67,941 in 2024/25 to 82,863 in 2025/26, representing an increase of 14,922 attendances (21.96%). Attendance levels were higher than the previous year in three out of four quarters, with particularly strong performance in Q1 (22,890 attendances), which was the highest quarterly figure recorded across the two-year period. Sustained growth indicates that more children, young people and families are accessing support and activities through the wider Family Hub system, demonstrating both increased reach and continued demand for services.

2.2.2 Geography

Family Hubs services are delivered across the Borough, utilising Family Hubs buildings and other community venues to ensure Family Hubs services and delivery is taken into the heart of communities.

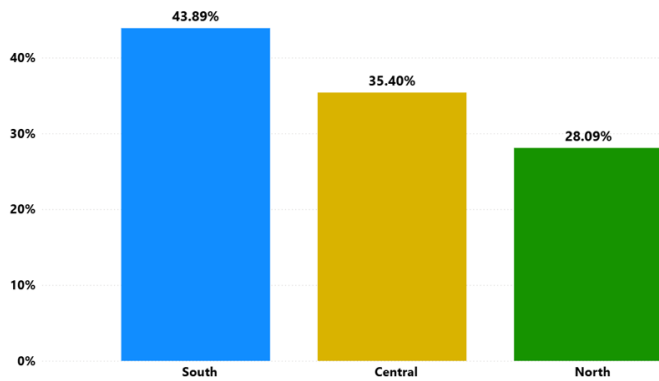
- 2.2.3 The heat map below demonstrates that families accessing Family Hub services live across all wards of the borough. This provides positive evidence that the Family Hubs programme is successfully reaching families in a wide range of communities, rather than being limited to those living close to physical Family Hub buildings. The geographic spread of engagement highlights the effectiveness of the wider Family Hub model, including outreach delivery, partnership working and commissioned services, in ensuring that support is accessible to families across the Borough. This broad reach demonstrates the programme's ability to maximise engagement, reduce barriers to access and connect more children, young people and families with the support they need.

Unique Attendees by Ward (2025/26)



- 2.2.4 The graph below shows that Family Hub services are reaching families across all three locality areas of the borough, demonstrating strong engagement and the ability of the Family Hub network to connect with families across communities. The South locality accounts for the largest proportion of unique attendees (43.89%), followed by the Central locality (35.40%) and the North locality (28.09%). When considered alongside the borough's population profile, this distribution broadly reflects the size of the resident population in each locality, with the South being the largest population area. This suggests that engagement with Family Hub services is proportionate to population distribution, rather than being concentrated in a particular part of the borough. Importantly, families from all localities are accessing support, evidencing the success of the Family Hub model in achieving borough-wide reach.

Unique Attendees by Area of Residence (25/26)



2.2.5 Ethnicity

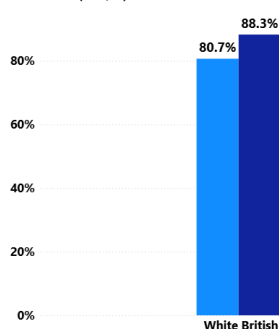
Ethnicity data demonstrates that the Family Hub programme continues to engage families from a diverse range of communities across Rotherham. While White British families account for the majority of attendees (80.7%), families from several minority ethnic groups are represented at levels above their proportion within the local population.

2.2.6 In particular, engagement from Asian or Asian British families is notably higher than the borough average, accounting for 7.7% of attendees compared with 5.3% of the population. Attendance is also proportionately higher amongst Black, Mixed and Other Ethnic groups. This suggests that Family Hub services are successfully reaching and engaging a broad range of communities.

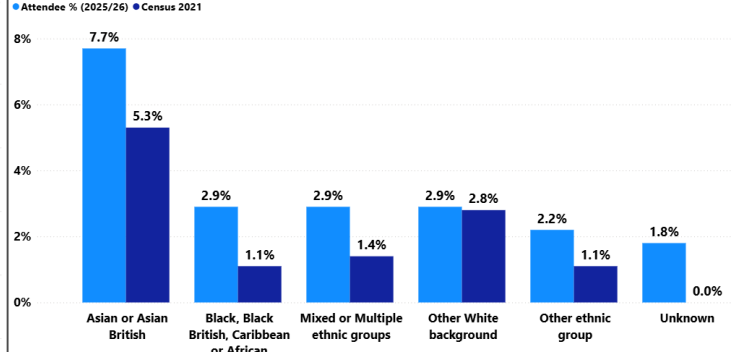
2.2.7 Encouragingly, attendance by Asian or Asian British families has increased significantly over the last two years, with quarterly attendance rising from just over 400 in Q1 2024/25 to more than 1,000 attendances per quarter throughout 2025/26, demonstrating sustained growth in engagement from this community.

Unique Attendees' Ethnicities Compared to the 2021 Rotherham Census
White British group is on a separate graph due to the large % difference between itself and other ethnic groups.

Attendee % (2025/26) Census 2021



Unique Attendees' Ethnicities Compared to the 2021 Rotherham Census
Attendee % (2025/26) Census 2021

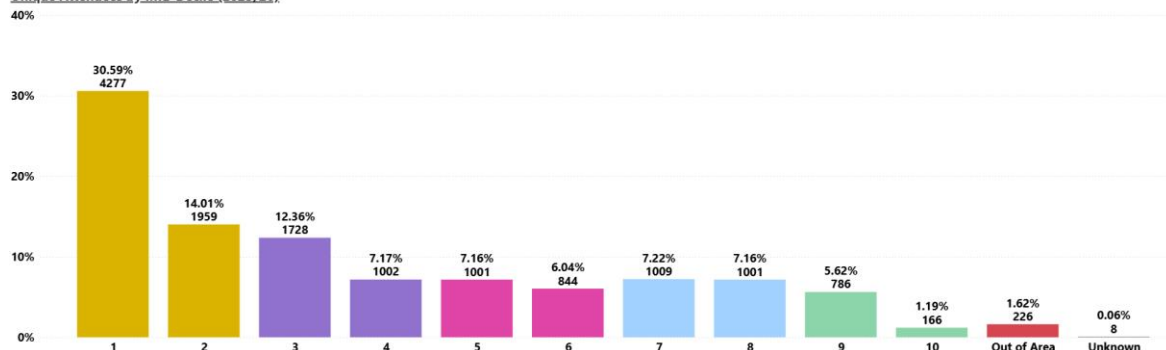


2.2.8 Deprivation

The deprivation profile of Family Hub attendees demonstrates that the programme is successfully reaching families in the borough's most disadvantaged communities. Over 30% of unique attendees (30.59%) live in the 10% most deprived areas, with almost 57% of attendees coming from the three most deprived deprivation deciles.

Engagement steadily reduces across the less deprived deciles, indicating that services are being accessed by those families who are often most in need of support. This provides strong evidence that the Family Hubs programme is effectively targeting and engaging families experiencing higher levels of deprivation while maintaining access for families across all communities.

Unique Attendees by IMD Decile (2025/26)



2.2.9 Although registration and participation levels are high, there remains an opportunity to better understand those families who are not engaging with Family Hub services. To address this, Family Hubs will undertake a programme of targeted engagement activity during 2026-27. This will include analysing registration and attendance data to identify underrepresented groups and localities, working with health partners, schools, early years providers and community organisations to increase referrals, and carrying out targeted outreach within communities where engagement is lower than expected. Family Hubs will also strengthen the use of family feedback and surveys to better understand barriers to participation, review the accessibility of sessions including timing and location, and develop more flexible delivery models to meet the needs of working families, fathers and carers. The introduction of improved digital intelligence and reporting systems will further support the identification of families who are not engaging with services, enabling earlier intervention and more personalised approaches to engagement.

2.3 Family Hubs Delivery

2.3.1 Infant Feeding

The infant feeding strand of the programme has made progress during 2025/26, strengthening support for families and contributing to improved breastfeeding outcomes across the borough. Key achievements include achieving UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) Stage 1 accreditation, expanding the breast pump loan scheme and increasing the number of trained breastfeeding peer supporters.

2.3.2 Delivery has been enhanced through a range of accessible community-based support offers, including peer support groups, drop-in clinics, breastfeeding and tongue-tie clinics, and peer supporter training. Services have been delivered both within Family Hub buildings and in community venues such as libraries, Grimm & Co and a local mosque, helping to improve accessibility and engage a wider range of families.

2.3.3 During the year, 331 families engaged with infant feeding support within Family Hub buildings, while many more accessed support through outreach locations. The Infant

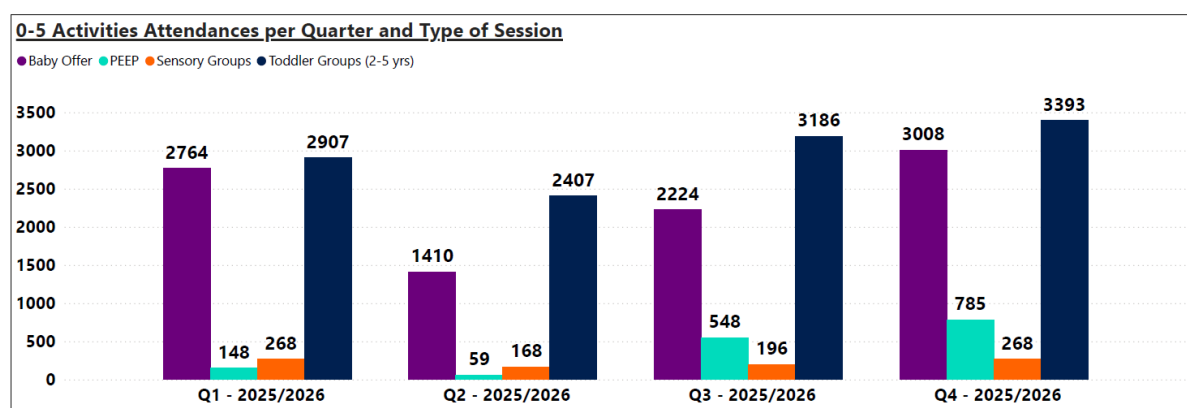
Feeding Team (Health) supported an additional 318 women and delivered 708 more contacts compared with 2024/25, demonstrating increased demand and reach.

2.3.4 In addition, 53 breast pumps were loaned to breastfeeding mothers, providing practical support to help families continue breastfeeding for longer. Overall, these achievements demonstrate the positive impact of the programme in improving access to infant feeding support and reducing barriers for families across Rotherham.

2.3.5 Whilst infant feeding support has expanded significantly during 2025/26 through increased community delivery, enhanced peer support and a wider range of accessible services, opportunities remain to strengthen outcome measurement and better understand the demographics of families accessing support. Future developments will focus on evidencing the impact of interventions on breastfeeding outcomes, increasing awareness and utilisation of available support, monitoring workforce capacity in response to growing demand, and ensuring services effectively reach priority and underserved groups, including younger mothers, fathers and partners, families experiencing deprivation, minority ethnic communities and parents with additional vulnerabilities.

2.3.6 Sessions for under 5's

The 0-5 offer continued to achieve strong engagement throughout 2025/26, with over 26,500 attendances across Baby Offer, Toddler Groups, PEEP and Sensory Groups.



2.3.7 Toddler Groups consistently attracted the highest levels of attendance, increasing from 2,907 in Q1 to 3,393 in Q4, demonstrating sustained demand from families with young children. Baby Offer sessions also maintained strong participation, recovering from lower attendance in Q2 to reach 3,008 attendances in Q4. Encouragingly, PEEP attendance grew significantly during the second half of the year, increasing from 59 attendees in Q2 to 785 in Q4, reflecting successful promotion and expansion of the offer. These figures demonstrate the importance of early years provision within Family Hubs and show that increasing numbers of families are engaging with activities that support child development, learning and school readiness.

2.3.8 Whilst increasing attendance provides strong evidence that the 0-5 offer is valued by families and is successfully engaging children across the borough, we recognise the need to strengthen our ability to demonstrate impact. Over the next year, we will focus on linking participation data to school readiness measures, developmental outcomes

and family progress indicators, with a particular emphasis on understanding the difference Family Hubs are making for children and families who are most at risk of poorer Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes.

2.3.9 Parenting Support and the Home Learning Environment (HLE)

Rotherham's Family Hubs programme provides a flexible offer to support both parenting capacity and the home learning environment, using a combination of face-to-face, online and community-based delivery. During 2025/26, there were 615 attendances at facilitator-led parenting programmes and a further 668 attendances through online parenting programmes, demonstrating strong engagement across a range of delivery methods and ensuring families can access support in a way that meets their needs.

2.3.10 Alongside this, the PEEP Learning Together Programme continued to expand its reach, with over 1,500 attendances recorded across Stay and Play groups, home visits, schools, libraries and structured PEEP programmes. Attendance grew significantly throughout the year, increasing from 148 in Q1 to 764 in Q4, reflecting the success of broadening the offer through workforce training, increased promotion and home-based support. Together, these programmes are helping parents build confidence, strengthen relationships with their children and develop the skills needed to support early learning and development within the home.

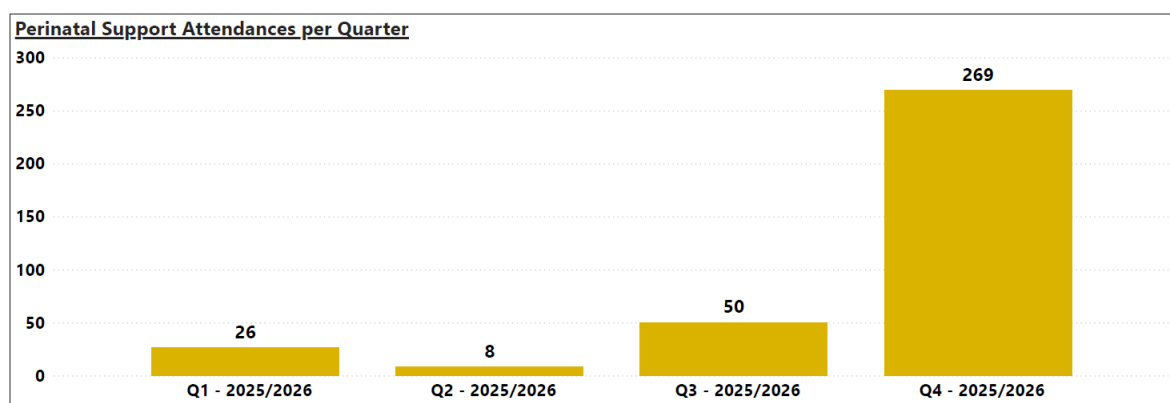
2.3.11 While there has been positive engagement with parenting support and home learning programmes, participation remains relatively modest when considered alongside the overall reach of Family Hubs services. To strengthen participation, we will work with health partners, schools, early years settings and Family Help services to increase referrals into parenting programmes; expanding the delivery of programmes through community venues and online platforms to improve accessibility; and reviewing session times and formats to better meet the needs of working families and fathers. Family feedback will be used to understand barriers to participation and inform future service design. In addition, outcome measures will be strengthened to capture changes in parenting confidence, family relationships and children's learning and development, enabling the programme to demonstrate not only participation levels but the difference that parenting support and HLE makes to children's outcomes and family wellbeing.

2.3.12 Perinatal Mental Health

The Family Hubs programme has continued to strengthen support for perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships through a combination of workforce development, evidence-based interventions and targeted commissioned services. During 2025/26, engagement with the commissioned peer support service delivered by Light increased significantly, rising from 26 attendances in Q1 and 8 in Q2 to 50 in Q3 and 269 attendances in Q4. This growth demonstrates increasing awareness of, and access to, perinatal mental health support among families across the borough.

2.3.13 Alongside direct support, the programme has invested in practitioner training, including perinatal mental health and Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), and continues to offer baby massage sessions to strengthen parent-infant relationships. The development of a dedicated perinatal mental health pathway will further improve

access to information, advice and support for parents, including fathers and partners, helping ensure families can access help at the earliest opportunity.



2.3.14 The Family Hubs programme has strengthened its perinatal mental health offer and achieved significant growth in engagement during 2025/26. Further work is required to demonstrate the impact of services on parental wellbeing, parent-infant relationships and longer-term child outcomes. Future development will focus on earlier identification of need, strengthening referral pathways, understanding the reach of services amongst priority and underserved groups, increasing engagement with fathers and partners, and improving performance reporting to evidence outcomes, access, demand and service effectiveness.

2.3.15 Services for older children

During 2025/26, the programme strengthened its offer for children and young people aged over five through a range of targeted youth services and activities. Sessions delivered through the Early Help Outreach and Engagement Team resulted in 6,379 attendances, while commissioned services recorded a further 27,823 attendances, demonstrating the significant reach of the programme across the borough. Overall, more than 34,000 attendances were recorded across youth provision, highlighting strong engagement from children and young people.

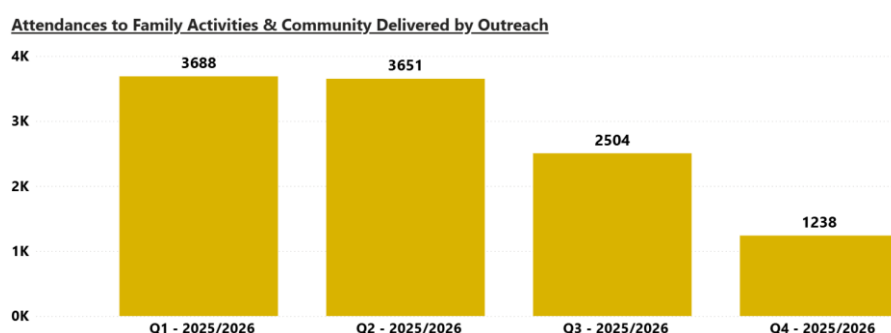
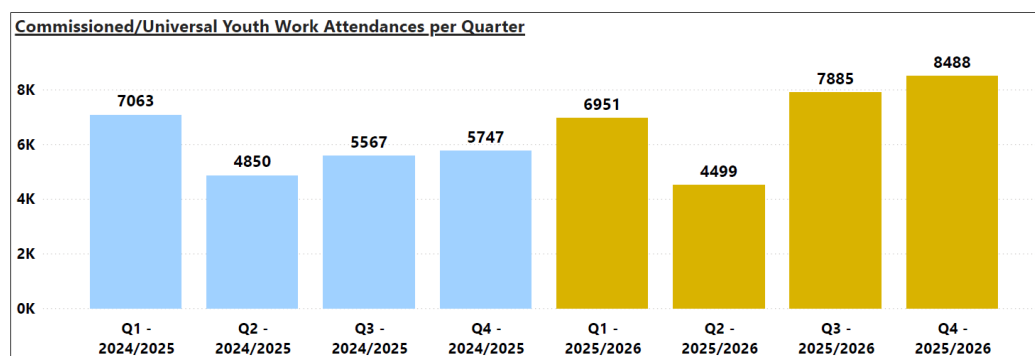
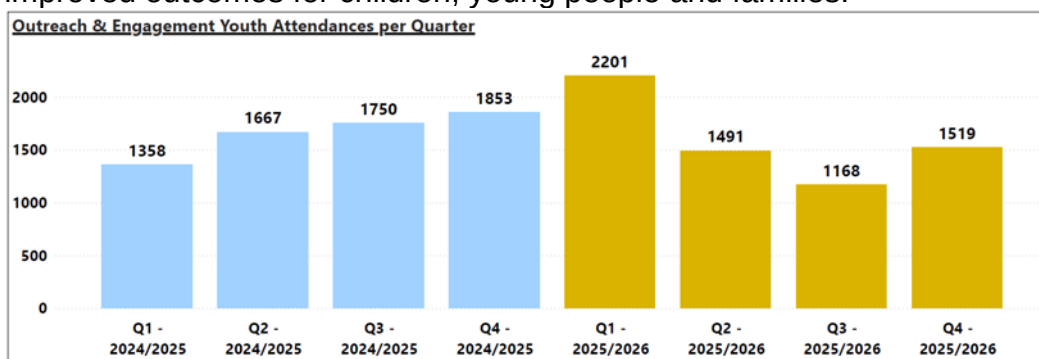
2.3.16 In addition, outreach teams delivered a wide range of family and community activities, generating 11,081 attendances throughout the year. Attendance was highest in Q1 (3,688) and Q2 (3,651), which is likely to reflect the increased opportunities for delivery and participation during the longer school holiday periods and seasonal community events. While attendance reduced in Q3 and Q4, outreach provision continued to maintain a strong community presence, supporting families to access local activities, services and opportunities. Together, these figures demonstrate the value of community-based outreach in engaging children, young people and families and supporting the Family Hubs commitment to a whole-family approach.

2.3.17 Performance data demonstrates very strong levels of engagement, with more than 34,000 attendances recorded through youth provision and a further 11,081 attendances through outreach and community activities during 2025/26. Whilst this provides positive evidence of the reach of Family Hubs services, there is an opportunity to strengthen our understanding of the impact these services are having on children and young people. Going forward there will be greater emphasis on

outcomes, including improvements in wellbeing, confidence, resilience, social connectedness and community participation.

2.3.18 Further work is also required to understand which children and young people are not accessing provision, particularly priority groups such as children with SEND, young carers, care-experienced children and those at risk of poorer outcomes. Strengthening this intelligence will support more targeted planning and help ensure services are reaching those who are likely to benefit most.

2.3.19 Performance reporting will be enhanced to include analysis by age, locality and priority groups, providing a clearer understanding of participation patterns and identifying any gaps in provision. In addition, work will be undertaken with commissioned providers to establish a consistent outcomes framework, ensuring that all services can demonstrate both reach and impact. The development of improved digital intelligence systems will further support the tracking of participation over time, enabling Family Hubs to better understand sustained engagement, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and demonstrate how youth provision contributes to improved outcomes for children, young people and families.



2.4 Next Steps

- 2.4.1 Building on the strong performance and reporting arrangements already established, the programme will continue to strengthen its use of data and intelligence to inform decision-making, service design and service delivery. Quarterly performance meetings provide scrutiny of delivery, outcomes and impact, while further work will be undertaken to improve performance information and ensure that all family contacts and engagement across the Family Hub network are consistently captured. The workstream will consider digital solutions to provide live performance data across the system, providing a richer understanding of service access, reach and outcomes, enabling resources and support to be targeted more effectively and ensuring that data is used proactively to identify children and families who may require additional support, particularly in relation to school readiness and the achievement of Good Level of Development (GLD) targets.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 To note the performance of the Family Hubs programme in 2025-26.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 A management information data report and delivery plan progress updates are submitted to the Department for Education (DfE).

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are not direct legal implications.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct HR implications.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct implications.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no direct implications.

12. Implications for Partners

13. Risks and Mitigation

Accountable Officer

Kirsty Woodhead – Head of Service, Family Help

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	Name	Date
The Executive Director with responsibility for this report	Name of Executive Director	02/09/26
Consultation undertaken with the relevant Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor Cusworth	Click here to enter a date.

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