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Introduction

The Hammersmith & Fulham Best Start in Life Local Plan 2026-2029 sets out our shared vision, priorities and commitments for supporting babies, young children and their families. Co-produced with families and partners, this plan brings together everyone responsible for commissioning and delivering early years and family services across the borough – including local authority services, early education and childcare providers, health partners and the voluntary and community sector.

The plan promotes a fully integrated approach across health, education, children’s social care, and community services. It focuses on early identification, prevention and timely intervention, with a particular emphasis on families facing disadvantage. Early support leads to better outcomes for children and reduces demand on specialist services.

The Best Start in Life Plan will sit alongside our Early Intervention, SEND, Family Help and Early Years strategies. It aligns with the government’s 10 Year Health Plan (July 2025), which places Best Start in Life and Neighbourhood Health at the heart of the national policy. Healthy child development and positive educational outcomes are closely linked - children who are healthy learn better, and children who achieve well in education go on to live healthier lives.

Our shared vision

Every baby, young child and family in Hammersmith & Fulham is happy, healthy and able to thrive - supported by a strong, connected and responsive community network.

Shared principles

Underpinning our vision is a set of jointly agreed principles. We want Hammersmith & Fulham to be a place where all young children and their families:

- Feel welcomed, included and valued.
- Have a voice, be listened to, and be equal partners in designing services.
- Have their needs identified early and accurately, with effective support put in place quickly.
- Experience joined-up services delivered by a skilled and confident workforce.
- Access high-quality, local services that meet their needs.
- Receive the right information at the right time.

Co-production

Co-production is central to how we design and deliver services. It shapes culture, strengthens trust, and improves outcomes.

To develop this plan, we have used a flexible and inclusive approach to engagement, reflecting the diversity of our borough to ensure that this plan is informed and shaped by residents. We worked with families and partners through:

- Building Communities for Happy Healthy Children co-produced events
- Family Voices (Best Start Family Hubs parent/carer panel)
- Youth Voice (Youth Council/Voice activities and events)
- Feedback loops including surveys, Menti-meter polling, WhatsApp groups, community listening events
- Community partners including Family Champions, schools, early years settings, libraries, community health settings, faith groups, baby and foodbanks
- Best Start Family Hub Partnership (Family Engagement, Youth Voice, Local Offer for SEND, Family Information Services, Digital Communications)

Hammersmith & Fulham: Local Context

- Children aged 0 to 4 represent **5%** of the borough's 2024 population (188,687) according to the Office for National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimates
- Over **60%** of residents are from ethnicities other than white British, and **45%** born outside the UK, this is compared to 13% nationally
- **3,330** children live in absolute low-income households in 2023/24 (**11.7%**, below London's 15.1% and national 18.7%)
- **20%** of neighbourhoods are among the most deprived 20% in England for income deprivation affecting children, particularly Wormholt, College Park and Old Oak
- The overall percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) is **71.5%**, with lower outcomes in 'Speaking' Early Learning Goals (ELGs)
- Children with EHC Plans, boys and children with English as their first language achieve less well than their peers
- Health Visitor New Birth Visits (NBV) within 14 days: **91.6%** (national: 85.2%)
- 2 to 2½ year reviews completed: **71%** (national 80.8%)

Best Start Family Hub Model

Best Start Family Hubs are central to this plan. They provide a welcoming, inclusive one-stop access to support families with children aged 0–19 (25 for SEND). The model brings together universal and targeted services, ensuring seamless pathways into more specialist support where needed.

Since 2023, H&F has developed an extensive network of family hub and satellite spaces. Co-located professionals share information and work together, so families experience a consistent offer wherever they access services. The hubs also connect families to wider community resources, from baby banks and foodbanks to parenting programmes, youth services and cost of living support.

Key priorities:

We have identified the following key priorities:

- Seamless service integration: strengthen multi-agency integration across education, health and community services
- Healthier children: strengthen the offer and delivery of health services in early childhood
- High-quality Early Education and Childcare: ensure the provision of more accessible high-quality provision
- Giving every Reception Child the Right Start by improving early identification of needs, transition arrangements and targeted support

Priority 1: Seamless Service Integration strengthen multi-agency integration across education, health and community services.

What we will do:

- Establish a strong Early Years Partnership to identify local needs, gaps and improvement opportunities
- Expand the core service offer delivered through Family Hubs and partner venues, including outreach in priority areas
- Build an integrated frontline workforce with shared approaches and multi-professional practice
- Strengthen digital and data maturity to improve understanding of need and tailoring of support
- Deliver targeted, evidence-based parenting and Home Learning Environment (HLE) support
- Publish clear, accessible pathways for families to navigate

How will we know we are making progress:

- An Early Years Partnership actively informs system improvements
- The Family Hub offer meets and exceeds national standards
- Staff report increased confidence and early years system awareness
- Families receive personalised support through dedicated Family Hub navigators
- Parenting and Home Learning Environment programmes are delivered consistently, with clear impact measures
- Referral pathways are visible and easy to access via the Local Offer for SEND and Family Hub websites

Priority 2 – Healthier children: strengthen the offer and delivery of health services in early childhood

What we plan to do:

- Improve maternity and newborn care through better use of data and integrated support
- Reduce smoking in pregnancy through targeted interventions and pre-pregnancy pathway for smoking and vaping
- Strengthen collaboration between midwifery, health visiting and early years services
- Expand access to infant feeding and breastfeeding support
- Improve Health Visiting services, including weekend clinics
- Enhance digital access for families to book appointments and access health information
- Increase vaccination uptake through targeted outreach and community clinics
- Support healthy eating through campaigns, nutrition programmes and school-based initiatives
- Reduce tooth decay through supervised toothbrushing in priority areas and improved access to dentists

How will we know we are making progress:

- Breastfeeding rates increase and families will have equitable access support
- Midwifery and early years services provide more integrated and family-centred care
- Smoking in pregnancy falls, with improved birth outcomes
- Uptake of mandated Health Visiting contacts increases
- Improved workforce resilience and retention in Health Visiting
- Immunisation coverage rises and families will feel confident in vaccinations
- Children make healthier food choices; more schools achieve Healthy Schools Awards
- Fewer hospital admission for tooth decay and improved access to dental care

Priority 3 - High-quality Early Education and Childcare: ensure the provision of more accessible high-quality provision

What we plan to do:

- Strengthen early identification of need through the Early Years Service
- Promote childcare entitlements and target outreach to eligible families not currently taking up their offer
- Work with the entire early years sector to increase uptake of entitlements
- Support providers with continuous quality improvement
- Build leadership, training and peer learning opportunities across the sector -learning opportunities across the sector
- Enhance the Early Years Inclusion offer, with greater access to training and specialist support

How will we know we are making progress:

- Increased choice of good and outstanding early years provision for families
- Eligible families receive proactive support to access childcare
- Uptake of childcare entitlements increases year on year
- Providers have strong quality improvement plans and improved curriculum practice
- Providers strengthen inclusive practice with access to a wider range of support

Priority 4: Giving every Reception Child the Right Start by improving early identification of needs, transition arrangements and targeted support

What we plan to do:

- Support all schools to use a consistent framework for assessing children's starting points in communication & language and personal, social and emotional development
- Embed a borough-wide communication and language approach in target schools
- Provide training and moderation to ensure consistent and accurate Early Years Foundation Stage assessment.
- Offer clear guidance to early years providers on expectations for Good Level of Development (GLD)
- Deliver universal and targeted quality improvement support to early years staff and leaders

How will we know we are making progress:

- All target schools use a validated assessment framework
- All target schools will use a consistent communication and language approach that is embedded and monitored
- A training and moderation programme is widely accessed, with targeted support for schools with higher needs
- GLD increases year on year towards borough and national targets

Measuring success

Progress will be reviewed annually and aligned with the national Best Start Family Hubs Framework and Best Start in Life Outcomes Framework.

Baseline data sources include:

- H&F Early Years Needs Assessment
- Family Hub audit
- Stakeholder feedback and co-production
- Local datasets
- Benchmarking (regional and national)

Key success measures will include:

As part of this three-year plan, we will measure the performance against each of the priorities.

We will use a national Best Start Family Hubs Framework and Best Start in Life Outcomes Framework to measure our progress. We will also be using a range of information including audit, data and stakeholder feedback to tell us how well we are performing, what's working well and where we need to act to achieve change.

We will use our baseline data which is made up of information from:

- Our local area Early Years Needs Assessment
- Our Best Start Family Hubs audit
- Stakeholder feedback and co-production activities
- Relevant H&F datasets and regional and national benchmarking to build on our existing datasets and develop a set of agreed success measures for our H&F Best Start in Life Outcomes Measures

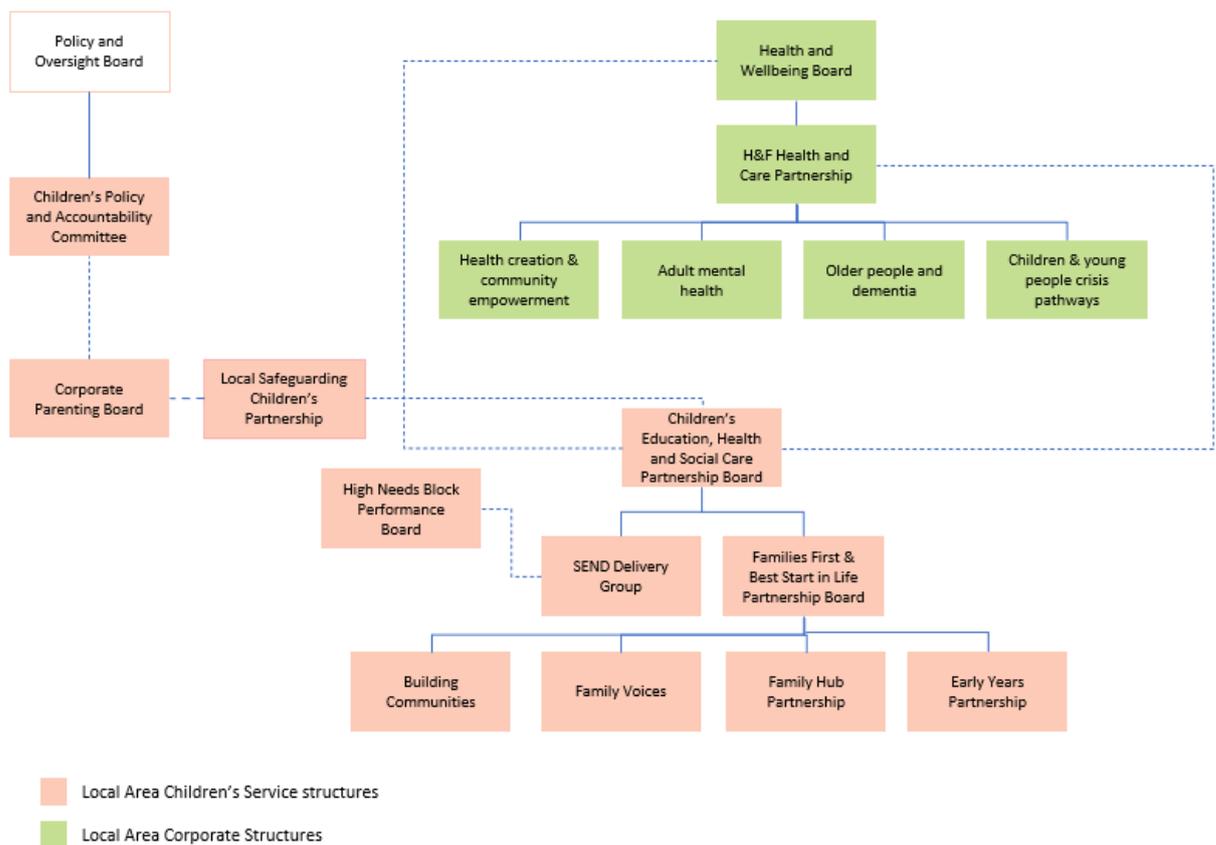
These will include the following:

- Increase GLD from 71.5% (2024/25) to 75% (2026/27) and 79.4% (2027/28).
- Narrow the GLD gap for children receiving Free School Meals meeting the target of 66.1%
- Increase 'Early Learning for 2s' entitlement take up-year-old entitlement take-up
- Increase engagement of targeted 3–4-year-olds in Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) parenting/HLE programmes to 40% by March 2027-year-olds in EBI parenting/HLE programmes to
- Improve early language outcomes in target schools
- Increase completion of 2–2.5-year Health Visitor reviews-year Health Visitor reviews
- Improve SEND navigation through dedicated specialists and clearer pathways

Governance

The Children’s Education, Health, and Social Care Partnership Board includes all local area partners involved in working with children. It is co-chaired by the Executive Director for People for the Council and the Borough Director for H&F in the NHS North-West London Integrated Care Board. The Board holds the local area to account on the progress of actions and priorities in this strategy. Following creation of the Children’s Education, Health and Social Care Partnership Board, the Families First & Best Start in Life Board will provide oversight of this local plan and subsequent programmes of work.

Governance structure



Appendices

Appendix A - Key implementation timeline and milestones

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Milestone	Date	Notes
Coproduction events with families and partners	Jun 2025-Feb 2026	Big conversations and partner events undertaken
Hub readiness	Jan 2026	Readiness confirmed
Governance confirmed; Programme mobilisation	Feb-Mar 2026	Leadership and Cabinet Boards approved
Best Start in Life Local Plan published on website	Mar 2026	As required by DfE guidance
Workforce training & EBI readiness	Mar– June2026	Facilitator accreditation complete
EBI delivery start (parenting & HLE for 3–4s)	Jun 2026	As required by DfE guidance
Comms campaign launch (phase 1)	Apr 2026	Branding per BSFH guidance
First outcomes dashboard 'live'	Jul 2026	Quarterly updates thereafter
Annual Plan Review & SOGU submission	Apr 2026 & Mar each year	Per S31 requirements
Expansion to additional satellite hubs and partner venues	Sept 2026	Subject to capital/services funding
Mid-term evaluation & adjustments	Apr–Jun 2027	Align with GLD trajectory
Final year optimisation	2027/28	Sustain/scale effective models

Appendix B – Best Start Services Action Plan

Best Start Priority	Lead Department	Area of focus	KPI/Outcome
Healthier children: strengthening health services in early childhood	Public Health	Improved Maternity and Newborn Care	Exclusive breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks > 65%
			At least 3 formalised service link agreements or joint programmes by March 2027
			Reduce maternal smoking at birth <2% 60% pregnant smokers receive quit smoking support
			Needs assessment undertaken Service integration based on data intelligence
		Strengthened Health Visiting Services	Weekend clinics available Increased uptake of mandated contacts Reduction in DNAs Improved family experience Improved equity of access Increase uptake of 2-2.5 year reviews
			Improved user experience Increased uptake of 2-2.5 year reviews >75%

			Improved staff retention Improved workforce resilience Reduce staff turnover by 15%
		Improving Access and Confidence in Vaccination	Increased immunisation coverage and confidence MMR >70% Petussis in pregnancy >68%
			Higher immunisation coverage and confidence
			Increase in immunisations
			Increase in immunisations
		Supporting Healthy Eating	500 families/year reached Improved diet
			Reduced obesity risk
			Reduced obesity risk
			Increased uptake of HENRY programme Improved diet
		Tackling Tooth Decay	STB coverage 100% in IMD1–2 Reduced hospital admissions for tooth decay

			KPI ~ Increased referral rate and Children getting dental care. Supporting CYP in Core20PLUS5 get access to NHS Dentists.
Leading local change: making services work better for families	Family Hubs	Further integrated services within family hubs	H&F Family Hubs offer at least minimum national standard of service delivery Service area pathways published for core services Family Hub services delivered from partner sites (e.g. schools, libraries)
			EY Partnership group established, to advocate for families and partners within the wider early years system
			Six EBI parenting/HLE programmes delivered within family hub network

			Pathways published on Family Hub website
		Family hub workforce and leadership	Family Hub parenting offer implemented with improved uptake Shared implementation with key partners (Family Help, SALT and Libraries) Pathways to targeted support published
			Review of Family Hub MDTs undertaken and recommendations implemented
		Smarter use of data for monitoring progress towards shared outcomes	Local Needs Assessment undertaken, enable data to be shared with key partners
			Dashboard evidences a reduction in variation in performance between different groups.
			Dashboard evidences a reduction in variation in performance between different groups and move towards overall target

			Data is used regularly as part of monitoring and evaluation by all teams.
		Keeping children safe within the wider early years system	BSiL programme aligned to Families, First reforms with aligned governance. Family Help pathways published within Family Hub website
		Programme Communication	Positive feedback captured and used to inform BSiL Local Plan
			Positive feedback captured and used to inform BSiL Local Plan
More accessible early education and childcare	Early Years	Inclusion of children with SEND within early years settings	Termly SEND sessions held and aligned with the new Inclusion Outreach. Data will reflect impact of inreach and outreach.
		Availability of early education and childcare places	Sufficiency report published in March 26.

		Improving support for low-income families	Percentage increase in take up of Early Learning 2 year olds
		Improving support for childminders	10% increase in engagement of CM in sessions . In person session to be held in May
A stronger early education and childcare system	Early Years	Improving the quality of early years provision	Introduce the new 4 year cycle of Inspection , clear identification and action of those in this new cycle
		Maintaining sector stability	Termly Census introduced from April 26, sector supported to provide regular data input to determine more accuracy of payments. Percentage of errors reduced to 2%
Improving quality in early years	Early Years	Improving early years workforce conditions and career pathways	Engage with Economy to promote EY careers and secondary schools
		Supporting more early years workforce to boost qualifications	PVI have increased awareness of pathways to training
		Develop early years leadership opportunities	Outreach programme commissioned and monitored to ensure it delivers the outcomes in the framework
Embedding high-quality inclusive practice to enable every child to thrive	Early Years	Making inclusive practice standard	Clusters introduced and running started January 26

		Boosting early maths and language skills	Training programme in place
		Expanding early years stronger practice hubs	Commissioned outreach in place across the borough
		New school-nursery partnerships	Meetings to take place termly.
Giving every reception child the right start	School Effectiveness	Extending early language support	Clear framework in place to assess starting points.
			80% of schools to take up the programme
			Increased uptake of training through the learning partnership.
		Clearer, more consistent assessment	Increased uptake of training through the learning partnership.
			Implementation of relevant support model for settings
		Supporting school leaders to focus on early years	Increase the uptake of EYFS focused reviews.
			Target 75% of schools to attend termly network meetings.
			Focused improvement for each schools towards a relevant school based target

<p>Stronger Families: Enhancing family help and safeguarding support for children through streamlined, relational based services</p>	<p>CYPS</p>	<p>Early help and intervention</p>	<p>Reduction in repeat referrals for families with children aged 0–5.</p>
			<p>Increased uptake of parenting programmes and positive feedback from families.</p>
			<p>Improved timeliness of assessments and care planning for children under five</p>
			<p>Higher engagement in FGDM processes for families with young children, leading to stronger family-based care plans</p>
			<p>Positive feedback from professionals and families on integrated working within hubs</p>

Appendix C – Local Needs Data

Population

Data Source. [Population estimates for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

Area	All Ages	Age 0 - 4	% 0-4 Years
England	58,620,101	3,072,243	5.2%
London	9,089,736	527,257	5.8%
Hammersmith and Fulham	188,687	9,413	5.0%

Health Visitor Metrics

Data Source. [Health visitor service delivery: data for 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Area	Annual New Birth Visits within 14 days (percentage)	Annual 2 to 2½ year reviews (percentage)
England	85.2%	80.8%
London	87.4%	68.4%
Hammersmith and Fulham	91.6%	-

Immunisation Statistics

Data Source. [Cover of vaccination evaluated rapidly \(COVER\) programme: annual reports - GOV.UK](#)

Immunisations at 12 months

Local authority	Number aged 12 months	Coverage at 12 months DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB (%)	Coverage at 12 months PCV1 (%)	Coverage at 12 months rota (%)	Coverage at 12 months MenB (%)
England	573740	91.3	93.1	88.8	91
London	103581	86.3	88	83.9	85.5
Hammersmith and Fulham	2180	80.8	84.4	79.3	81.2

Immunisations at 24 months

Local authority	Number aged 24 months	Coverage at 24 months DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB Prim (%)	Coverage at 24 months MMR1 (%)	Coverage at 24 months Hib/MenC booster (%)	Coverage at 24 months PCV booster (%)	Coverage at 24 months MenB booster (%)
England	591,605	92.5	88.9	88.6	88	87.3
London	104473	87.1	80.8	80.2	79.2	78.5
Hammersmith and Fulham	2127	81.9	74.9	74.2	73.2	69.1

Immunisation Statistics

Data Source. [Cover of vaccination evaluated rapidly \(COVER\) programme: annual reports - GOV.UK](#)

Immunisations at 5 years

Local authority	Number aged 5 years	Coverage at 5 years DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB Prim (%)	Coverage at 5 years MMR1 (%)	Coverage at 5 years dTaP/IPV booster (%)	Coverage at 5 years Hib/MenC booster (%)	Coverage at 5 years MMR2 (%)
England	657,098	92.8	91.8	81.3	88.9	83.7
London	114,029	86.5	84.4	63.8	80.0	69.6
Hammersmith and Fulham	2,020	80.8	80.1	48.6	76.1	59.2

Children in Low income Families

Data Source. [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

Area	Number of children FYE 2024	Percentage of children FYE 2024
United Kingdom	2336254	18.7%
London	255694	15.1%
Hammersmith and Fulham	3330	11.7%

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

% of children assessed to be making a good level of development

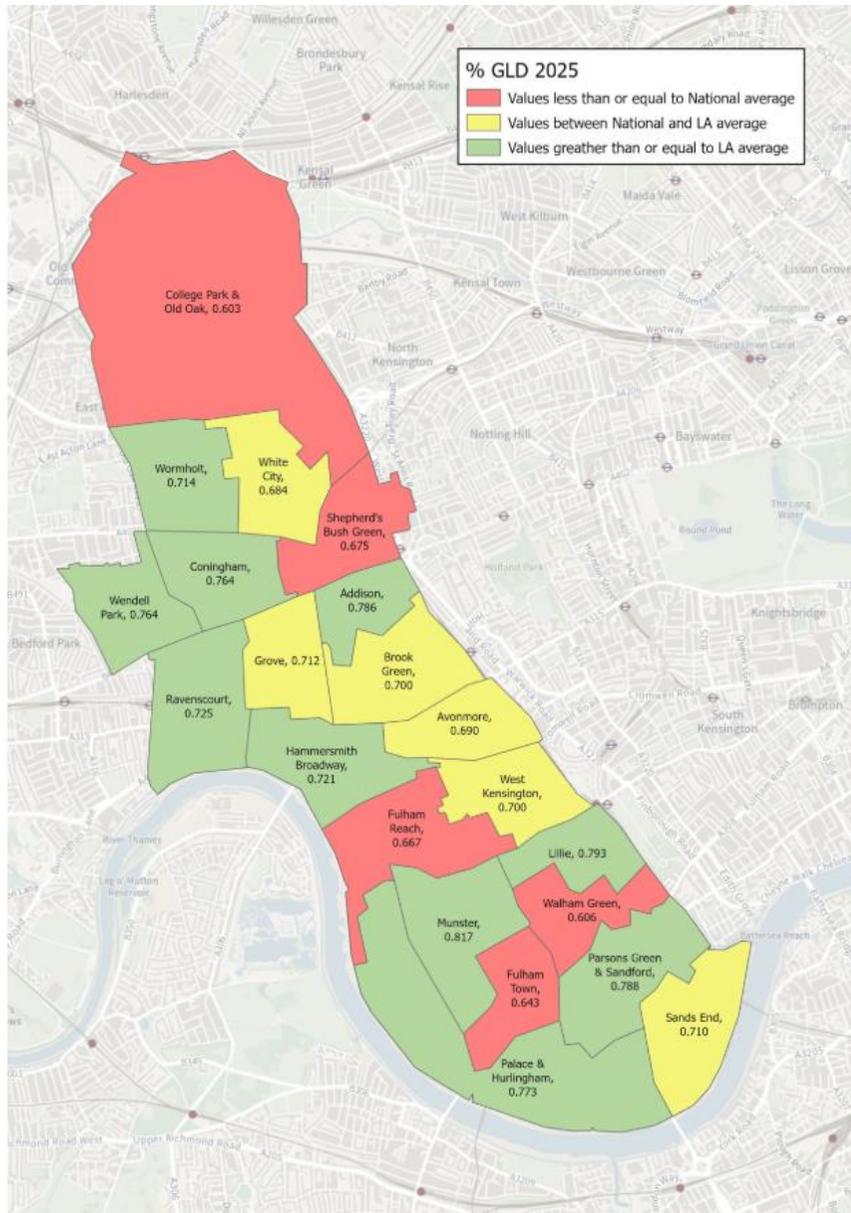
Data Source. [Early years foundation stage profile results: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Area	% Achieving a GLD	
	2024/25	2023/24
England	68.3	67.7
London	70.7	70.0
Hammersmith and Fulham	71.5	70.4

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

Ward Level % of children assessed to be making a good level of development
Data Source. Local Intelligence

Ward	% GLD 2025	% GLD 2024
Addison	78.6%	74.5%
Avonmore	69.0%	57.9%
Brook Green	70.0%	78.0%
College Park & Old Oak	60.3%	65.9%
Coningham	76.4%	77.1%
Fulham Reach	66.7%	68.2%
Fulham Town	64.3%	66.7%
Grove	71.2%	83.6%
Hammersmith Broadway	72.1%	62.5%
Lillie	79.3%	70.0%
Munster	81.7%	77.6%
Palace & Hurlingham	77.3%	67.7%
Parsons Green & Sandford	78.8%	74.4%
Ravenscourt	72.5%	77.8%
Sands End	71.0%	62.8%
Shepherd's Bush Green	67.5%	59.3%
Walham Green	60.6%	55.3%
Wendell Park	76.4%	72.5%
West Kensington	70.0%	54.8%
White City	68.4%	67.3%
Wormholt	71.4%	72.5%
Total	71.4%	69.5%



Appendix D – Service Directory

You can get information, advice or support with the following:

Activities for babies and children	Infant feeding support	Parenting support
Domestic abuse support	Intensive targeted family support services	Reducing parental conflict
Early language and the home learning environment	Public Health services	SEN and disability support
Debt and welfare support	Mental health services	Stop smoking support
Health visiting	Midwifery and maternity	Substance (alcohol/drug) misuse support
Housing advice and support	Nutrition and weight management	Support for separating and separated parents
Youth services - universal and targeted	Parent-infant relationships and perinatal mental health support	Oral health improvement

You can access all the above services and more information here: [The Family Hub | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham](#)

Appendix E – Evaluation Framework

Please refer to separate H&F Best Start in Life Outcome Measures document