

Full Council – 10 November 2025

1st Labour Group Motion

Supporting Labour's 30 Hours of Free Childcare – A Better Start for Every Brent Child

This Council notes:

- The Labour Government's pledge of 30 hours of free childcare per week for working parents of children aged 9 months to school age, ensuring affordable, high-quality childcare for families.
- Evidence that investment in early years education improves children's life chances, narrows attainment gaps and supports economic growth by enabling parents – particularly mothers – to return to work.
- Brent is home to over 73,000 children and young people under 18, representing 22% of the borough's population. Yet 35% of children aged 15 and under live in poverty after housing costs – one of the highest rates in London. For many families, the cost of childcare has been a barrier to work and a major contributor to hardship.
- The previous Conservative Government's neglect left parents facing some of the highest childcare costs in Europe, with many local providers struggling to recruit and retain skilled staff due to chronic underfunding.
- Brent's Family Wellbeing Centres, which reached over 7,400 residents in just one quarter of 2024/25, are a cornerstone of our local early years system – bringing together health visitors, early education, and family support to give children the best start in life.

This Council believes:

- Labour's 30-hour offer will be transformative for Brent, easing the cost-of-living pressures faced by local families, reducing child poverty, and giving thousands of parents better support.
- Delivering this reform successfully requires sustained national funding and local flexibility – recognising the higher operational costs faced by London providers and the importance of valuing and retaining the childcare workforce.

- Brent's experience through its Family Wellbeing Centres and Early Help partnerships provides a strong foundation for implementing the new entitlement locally, ensuring wrap-around support for children with additional needs and for parents seeking employment or training.
- This expansion represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rebuild a fair, universal early years system rooted in community, equity and opportunity – helping to ensure that every Brent child can thrive, regardless of background or circumstance.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Welcome and support the Labour Government's childcare reforms and commend the decisive action to make childcare affordable, accessible and fair.
- (2) Celebrate Brent's leadership in early years and family support through its network of Family Wellbeing Centres and Children's Centres, which are already delivering measurable impact and providing vital early intervention.
- (3) Work with local nurseries, schools, and childminders to ensure Brent is fully ready to deliver the expanded offer from 2025 onwards, identifying any workforce pressures, training needs or gaps in provision.
- (4) Write to the Secretary of State for Education to:
 - Welcome the policy and reaffirm Brent's readiness to deliver;
 - Emphasise that funding must reflect London's higher cost base and ensure sustainability for local providers; and
 - Highlight the importance of linking childcare expansion with wider Family Wellbeing and Early Help reforms.
- (5) Commit to convening a local childcare partnership forum, bringing together providers, parents, trade unions and council officers to oversee delivery, share best practice, and ensure that every Brent child benefits from Labour's promise of a better start in life.

Councillor Rita Begum
Kilburn Ward