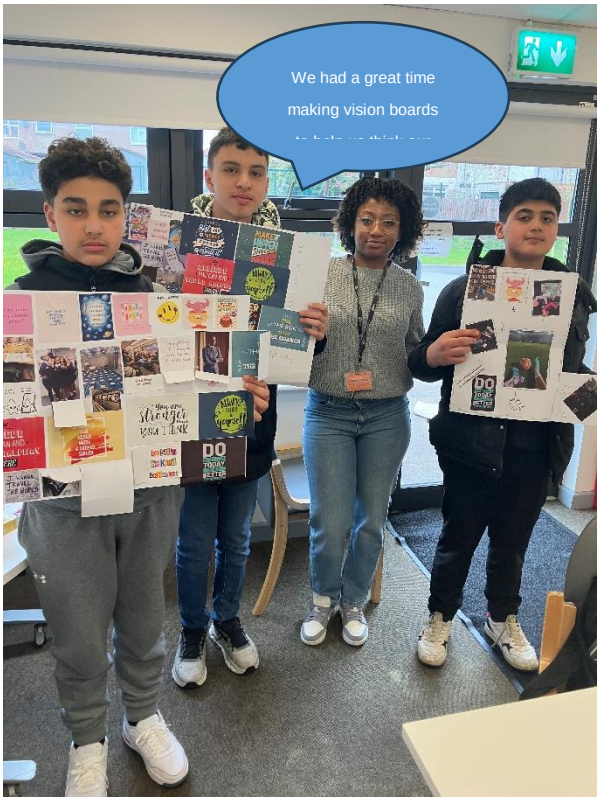
Family Wellbeing Centre
Annual Report 2025-26



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1. Overview

1.1 Introduction and Context

1.1.1. The Family Wellbeing Centres (FWCs) form a central part of the borough's universal and preventative offer. FWCs act as an accessible 'front door' for families, providing a broad range of services, including health, local authority, parenting and targeted family support.

1.1.2. There is a consistent core offer across all centres, complemented by locally tailored provision to meet community need. Collectively, FWCs deliver a diverse and extensive programme of support, as detailed in appendix 1.

1.1.3. FWCs are a key priority within the Borough Plan (2023–2027) and underpin Brent's integrated, whole-family approach for children and young people aged 0–18 (up to 25 for those with SEND). By bringing together services such as health visiting, school nursing, early years provision, and family support, FWCs strengthen coordination, early identification, and targeted intervention, particularly for vulnerable families.

1.1.4. The model is community-led and partnership-based, shaped through local steering groups and key stakeholder partners within Brent. FWCs operate full-time, with extended and weekend access to improve reach, and maintain a strong focus on inclusion, including dedicated SEND support and specialist provision at Willow FWC.

1.1.5. The FWC are open at weekends, 9am to 1pm, during term-time. 1 FWC is open in the West and 1 in the East, and centres are rotated each half-term to ensure they are accessible to families across Brent. The weekend offer focuses on supporting parents with under 5's as working parents feedback was the Monday to Friday offer during core business hours was not accessible. The weekend service offer has expanded and now includes for example: Citizens Advice Brent, Dads activities, infant feeding support, immunisation catch-up clinics, etc.

1.1.6. The FWC model supports delivery of the Governments Best Start in Life, Family Hubs and Healthy Babies programme. As part of this programme the DfE required a national rebranding to Best Start Family Hubs and moving into the 2026/27 reporting year the FWC will be rebranded to Best Start Family Hubs and reporting will be aligned to national programme requirements.

1.1.7. Government Minister (Alison McGovern, Minister of State DWP), the Mayor's Office (Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor) and the Child Poverty Unit visited Brent in May 2025 to review the FWC delivery model and how this supports families with the cost-of-living crisis, see figure 1. There is national and regional interest in Brents' partnership and community-based approach used to reduce the impact of poverty including:

- FWC at the heart of communities providing access to food via food donation programmes, toy libraries, providing advice on health lifestyles and cooking lessons for example to Feed Your Family for £5 with nutritious food
- Co-locating services at the FWC such as Citizens Advice, Housing, etc, providing family support via a holistic approach at settings that can be easily accessed and families have trusted relationships with staff
- Bringing together Community Voluntary Faith and Statutory partners into an early help 'village of support' for families to be connected into.

Figure 1: Government Minister, Mayor's Office and Child Poverty Unit visit to Curzon Crescent FWC



1.1.8. This report details the outcomes of the key priorities for 2025/26, provides a comprehensive report on service delivery and sets out the targets for 2026/27.

1.2 Key Priorities and Progress from 2025/26

During the reporting period 19,490 families have been supported to achieve positive outcomes against key priorities:

1.2.1 **Deliver the final year of the Start for Life programme and exit planning** - the Start for Life delivery plan was successfully implemented across all strands and regular updates were provided to the DfE who visited a FWC during the year to review progress. The Start for Life programme transitioned to the Best Start Family Hub and Healthy Babies programme in April 2026. The programme has created an integrated one-stop shop of family support services to prevent developmental issues escalating into more complex needs. This includes for example improved school readiness outcomes, integrated neighbourhood health services, reducing inequalities and simplified access to support.

1.2.2 **Increase the number of families registering** – the number of families registering has decreased by 1,146 (13%) from last year. However, on reflection registrations should have plateaued since the transition to the FWC delivery model in 2021 and the initial spike with more families being eligible to register, given families with children up to 18 and not just under 5s, met the expanded service user criteria. The reduction this year is partially due to Key Workers transitioning into the new Family Support Teams and Granville FWC being temporarily closed while it decanted to new premises. There was also a technical issue with the registration portal which temporarily prevented families from registering online which has since been resolved.

To note, even though registrations have fallen the number of contacts with families has increased and the number of unique families worked with has also increased. This means that whilst registrations have fallen, more families currently registered are being supported to achieve positive outcomes and impact as detailed in section 1.3 below. An active communication and outreach plan is in place with the aim of ensuring registrations continue to be maintained. Work continues with all partners to promote FWC registration and take-up of services, ensuring that partners recognise this as a shared responsibility.

1.2.3 **Develop the FWC youth offer linked to the refreshed Youth Strategy and delivery plan** – the FWC youth offer has continued to grow at some FWCs. Activities have included for example Arts and Crafts, Homework Clubs, Mixed Martial Arts, Teen Space, Gaming, Hair and Beauty and girls only sessions. More CVS partnerships have been established, such as hosting Ansar at Preston Park FWC who are funded externally to deliver activities. The impact on CYP includes for example: improved physical and mental wellbeing, reducing isolation, expanding social network, build essential life and employability skills, creating a sense of community and belonging, to help reduce the risk of involvement with crime and anti-social behaviour by providing safe spaces and access to trusted adult mentors.

1.2.4 **Supporting the development of the new Early Help and Social Care family support model to ensure the service is fit for purpose and works effectively in partnership with the FWC** – the new Family Support Teams are now in place and embedding. Family Support Workers are linked to their respective geographical FWC. However, further work is needed to ensure that Family Support Workers continue to use the FWC to meet families, promote registration and service take-up. Guidance has been issued requesting that Family Support Workers are present at the FWC at least 1 day per week. The impact of the changes means that families only need to tell their story once, the number of handover points for families has reduced and there is greater consistency for families with a single practitioner being involved.

1.2.5 **Supporting the development of the new Targeted Prevention Hub ensuring FWC are a key partner with strong links** – the Targeted Prevention Hub has been established and links are in place with the FWC to refer young people and parents into the support offer. Targeted Prevention Hub staff can hot desk at the FWC to encourage co-location and service integration. The Targeted Prevention Hub is still in development but outcomes for young people include reducing anti-social behaviour, lowering youth reoffending, increased mental health and wellbeing, improve school attendance and connect at-risk youth with education and employment.

1.2.6 **Capitalising on the redeveloped outside play areas to deliver a greater range of environmental projects and activities** – the aim is to encourage more outdoor play and learning. A range of outdoor activities and environmental projects take place across the FWC and the outside play areas are well used. Outdoor activities include for example: gardening clubs, growing vegetables/herbs, composting, stories and exploring mini beasts. Childminding networks also use the FWC resources, including the outside play areas. Being outdoors is crucial for children's development and improves their mental health/ wellbeing, physical fitness and social skills. Exposure to nature helps to reduce stress and build resilience and self-esteem through safe, adventurous and stimulated play.

1.3 Outcomes and Impact

1.3.1 The outcomes and impact achieved for families through the FWC is wide ranging given the verse range of services on offer. During the year 19,490 families, making over 150,000 contacts with the FWC, have been supported to achieve outcomes in the following areas:

- Improved family finances and reducing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis
  - CAB supported 1,262 families to achieve financial gains of £1,019,214
- Improved family nutrition, weight management and access to fresh fruit and vegetables
  - Felix donated food items equivalent to over 50,000+ meals including fresh fruit and vegetables
- Support to stop smoking improving family health and wellbeing

- Health and FWC staff engaged with 4,000+ families regarding the risks of smoking during pregnancy and the importance of smoke free environments at home

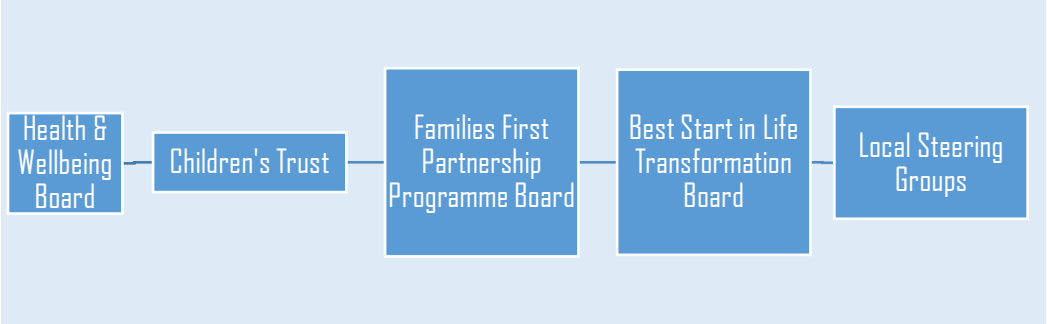
- Improved oral health and reducing teeth extraction for under 5's
  - Oral health promotion sessions were delivered to over 1,000 families
- Improved parent/carer and CYP mental health and wellbeing
  - 1,755 families were triaged and connected into appropriate support including for example Talking Therapies, Kooth, Health and Wellbeing Workshops and Counselling services
- Improved parenting capacity leading to better relationships between parents and their children, reducing children's behavioural problems and better communication
- Improving CYP and parent/carers emotional literacy
- Reducing negative discipline practices such as smacking and providing parents with alternative approaches
- Reducing parental conflict and the negative impact on families
  - 709 parents attended accredited parenting programmes and workshops
- Reducing substance misuse and its impact on families
  - Where families are identified with substance misuse issues they are referred to Via New Beginnings. Via also refer families to the FWC for wrap around support
- Improved family fitness leading to better wellbeing outcomes
  - 400+ families participated in Busy Feet and other family fitness related programmes
  - 51+ families participated in HENRY parenting programmes
- Increasing refugee and asylum seeker engagement with early help and preventative services
  - A specialist Triage Officer engaged with 200+ refugee and asylum seeker families, some families are given Oyster cards with regular credit to enable access to the FWC, families also benefit from vouchers for clothing during winter
- Preventing family problems becoming more complex and entrenched by intervening earlier and providing the right support at the right time
- Preventing family breakdown and children going into care
  - 1,755 families were triaged and connected into appropriate support, 159,000+ contacts were made with 19,490 families engaging with universal and some targeted services
- Reducing the risk of domestic abuse and improving outcomes for families impacted by domestic abuse
  - Advance Independent Domestic Violence Practitioners (adults and children's) are co-located at the FWC and supported over 100 families and women accessed the Freedom programme
- Improving parents' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
  - Brent Start delivered ESOL and Numeracy workshops and 100+ parents attended
  - FWC staff helped 3,000+ families with ICT to register, book online and complete online forms such as school applications etc
- Supporting parents and young people into employment and to access educational and work experience opportunities
  - Family Work Coaches are collocated at the FWC and helped 150+ parents into employment
  - Connexions PAs are collocated at the FWC and helped 100+ young people into education, employment or training

- Reducing the impact of caring responsibilities on children and improved understanding by schools/partners regarding the issues that impact young carers leading to better educational outcomes
  - 132+ Young Carers were identified and supported during the year
- Reducing social isolation, particularly for new mums
  - 4,000+ mums benefited from activities for under 2's
- Improving a range of outcomes for families of children with SEND
- Improving children's school readiness
- Improving school attendance, punctuality, attainment and engagement with school activities.
- Reducing health inequalities for the most vulnerable families.
- Reducing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma
- Increasing family's resilience to the impact of multiple disadvantages.

1.4 Governance arrangements

1.4.1 The FWC East and West Local Steering Groups (LSGs) meet termly, with the exception of Willow and Curzon/ Fawood, which have different governance arrangements. The LSG are neighbourhood forums for sharing information, identifying need, support requirements for families and service gaps/pressures, challenging performance and quality of delivery, acting as local agents for integrating services and drawing in additional resources. The LSG Chairs are elected from the group membership and are currently voluntary sector partners. The FWC governance arrangements will change in the new reporting period to align with new Best Start Family Hub and Family First Partnership programmes.

Figure 2: FWC governance and reporting arrangements



1.5 Headline data for 2025-26

1.5.1 Table 1 gives a summary of the FWC key performance indicators for 2025-26 (The full data report is included as appendix 2).

Table 1: Key Performance Indicators 2025-26

No.	Area	Measure	Period			No. Difference	% Change	Comments - 2025/26
			2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2025/26 and 2024/25	2025/26 and 2024/25	
1	Registrations	Number of children and young people and adults registering with Family Wellbeing Centres	7,516	8,662	12,486	- 1,146	-13%	Registration reports are not picking up all carer registrations. This is being investigating (May-26)
2	Reach - Contacts	Number of registered services users that have had a contact with Family Wellbeing Centres	19,490	18,079	15,849	1,411	8%	
3	Volume - Contacts	Number of recorded contacts with registered service users at Family Wellbeing Centres	159,004	151,613	124,302	7,391	5%	Total volume figures include online/offsite events recorded as 'Out of Area'
4a	Reach - Dads	Number of registered dads/male carers contacted	2,901	2,568	2,323	333	13%	
4b	Volume - Dads	Number of recorded contacts with registered dads/male carers contacted	17,771	14,461	14,563	3,310	23%	
5	Triage	Total number of families supported by Triage	1,755	1,674	2,135	81	5%	
6a	Parenting Support	Number of parents completing accredited parenting programmes/workshops	709	374	447	335	90%	These totals include parents that have attended more than one programme/workshop within the period. Excluding duplicates, totals are given below in the notes
6b		Percentage of parents completing accredited parenting programmes/workshops	85%	76%	79%	9%	12%	
6c		Number of parents attending accredited parenting programmes/workshops	833	494	567	339	69%	
7	School Readiness	Number of attendances at the universal Speech & Language Communication Let's Talk sessions	1,497	2,457	2,207	- 960	-39%	2025/26 data is from eStart - Event Volume for Let's Talk. Data for previous years is from SLT commissioned service
8	Public Health - Reach - Healthy Start Vitamins	Number of people that have received Healthy Start Vitamins	3,661	3,498	2,396	163	5%	
	Data extration date - Registrations / Reach / Volume Contacts		08-Apr-26	09-May-25				

Notes:
Registrations, Reach and Volume Contacts - The YTD figure is calculated seperately and will include any data that's been added since the previous quarter data was extracted. The sub totals are not added manually to get the YTD total
Parenting Support - The figure includes parents that have attended more than one programme/workshop within the period

1.5.2 Where there is a significant variance in performance, these are explained below:

- Registrations – the number of families registering has decreased by 1,146 (13%) from last year. However, on reflection registrations should have plateaued since the transition to the FWC delivery model in 2021 and the spike with more families being eligible to register, given families with children up to 18 and not just under 5's, meet the service user criteria. The reduction this year is partially due to Key Workers transitioning into the new Family Support Teams and Granville FWC being temporarily closed while it decanted to new premises. There was also a technical issue with the registration portal which temporarily prevented families from registering online which has since been resolved. Work is progressing to ensure that links between the new Family Support Teams and FWC remains strong and families are connected into the wider early help offer.
- Dads – there has been a 13% increase in Reach and Volume data as a result of the Dads worker being in post and the dads programme embedding across the FWCs.
- Parenting – there has been a significant increase in the number of parents attending accredited parenting programmes due to the take up of the Triple P Group workshops and the Parents As First Teachers Group connections sessions. These workshops are 2 hours in duration and focus on specific topics that parents with which parents' may be struggling with.
- School Readiness – There is a reduction in the number of children accessing universal Speech and Language sessions as the contract with LNWHT to provide Speech and Languages services ended 31 March 2025 and the service was mainstreamed within existing FWC resources. A new speech and language support model, WellComm, has been piloted at St Raphael's FWC and some early years settings. The aim is to identify children with speech, language and communication needs earlier and provide support strategies to parents. The programme has needed some adapting for FWC use. Early indicators show positive impact on children's speech and language development and some children have also been identified for

funded nursery places and benefited from attending nursery provision. The programme will be rolled out across all FWCs and some early years settings in the new reporting year.

1.6 Strategic Context

1.6.1 Best Start in Life (Early Years strategy)

1.6.1.1 The Brent Early Years Strategy and Best Start in Life (BSiL) Local Plan 2026–2029 was developed in spring term 2026 and responds to the significant opportunities and challenges facing families with children from conception to age five and beyond. They recognise the lifelong impact of experiences in the earliest years, including the first 1,001 days and the crucial period from age three to five. The aim is to enable the youngest children to grow, learn and develop the skills needed to thrive in school and beyond.

1.6.1.2 The strategy focuses on 6 priority areas:

1. A joint commitment to system change
2. A seamless experience for families, jointly owned and delivered
3. Data that works for families and for professionals
4. A welcome from the start for every child and family, with a focus on early years inclusion
5. A clear Best Start in Life pathway for every Brent baby and family
6. High quality sustainable early education and childcare that supports all children to thrive.

1.6.1.3 Dedicated work streams will be developed around the key priorities. The FWC will be linked to the work streams and will support delivery of the strategy. This work links to the national Family Hub and Best Start for Life programme as detailed in section 2.4.3 including the Best Start in Life local delivery plan 2026-2029.

1.6.2 Inclusion strategy

1.6.2.1 The Inclusion Strategy 2026-2029 was developed over the last reporting year and following extensive consultation with stakeholders the three priority areas in Brent for children and young people with SEND are:

1. Improve support
2. Improve safety in the community
3. Improve preparation for adulthood.

1.6.2.2 Each priority has many agreed actions linked to it, so multi-agency partners know what they need to do to achieve the things that matter to the community. The FWC are linked to the work streams and will support delivery of the strategy. The new Best Start Family Hub programme has a requirement that all Family Hubs have Best Start Inclusion Practitioners that will support SEND families to increase engagement and participation with FWC services and identify children with additional needs early, connecting them into specialist support where necessary.

1.6.3 Youth Strategy

1.6.3.1 The refreshed Brent Youth Strategy 2025-28 and action plan have been delivered during the year, supporting young people's priorities of:

1. Being Heard and Taking Part
2. Reaching Goals and Enjoy Yourself
3. Feeling Good
4. Staying Safe.

1.6.3.2 The Brent Youth Strategy Action Plan outlines Brent's 2025–26 priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people across four strategic pillars:

1. Engagement and Participation
2. Skills and Opportunities
3. Health and Wellbeing
4. Safety.

1.6.3.3 Each section focuses on deepening partnerships, expanding youth voice, improving access to spaces and services, and integrating multi-agency working. There is significant overlap between the Youth strategy action plan delivery and the FWC, such as providing safe spaces for young people to meet, delivering diversionary activities, providing access to Connexions PA Advisors and mentors.

1.6.3.4 CYP being visible and heard is a strategic priority within the Borough Plan, SEND strategy, CYP Participation and Engagement Strategy, and Brent Youth Strategy. The co-production of activities and the creation of a Youth Panel enabled CYP to take an active part in improving youth services and influencing strategic decisions. CYP have been involved in the process of creating strategies that improve their childhood experiences and future life chances.

2. Delivery

The narrative below gives a summary of the provision delivered by key stakeholders working in partnership across the FWC network.

2.1 Local Authority delivery

2.1.1 Triage

2.1.1.1 The Triage service helps to achieve positive outcomes for children and families who require light touch interventions or short-term pieces of work with families who meet the criteria for Universal (Level 1) and Level 2 support. The common presenting issues to the triage service include:

- Families re-locating from other areas with no resources (i.e. household goods, lack of finances, etc)
- Debt - including utilities, rent, council tax, etc
- Children not in school
- Cost of living related issues
- Housing - overcrowding/ evictions/ disrepairs
- New arrivals - including Ukrainian families, other asylum seekers
- Parents with children who have undiagnosed additional needs who require help to access specialist services.

2.1.1.2 The nature of the support required by families often spans across many areas at once e.g., Housing, Education, Financial instability and as such the length of time (initially approximately 4-6 weeks) that workers are involved with families has increased to 10-12 weeks, or in some cases longer with a small cohort.

2.1.1.3 Triage intervention continues to help prevent needs from escalating and requiring higher level and more costly interventions and achieves positive outcomes for families linked to the presenting issues identified above.

2.1.1.4 Other support via the Triage service includes:

- Helping Ukrainian, asylum and refugee families, who have newly arrived in the UK and require support to integrate in the community
- Travel Access scheme - funded by the Asylum Dispersal Grant, assists those families who are seeking asylum and have limited income to travel to FWCs, maintain appointments with partner agencies or get to health appointments and is made available to families through the FWCs
- Winter and Warm scheme – vulnerable families are given a £50 shopping voucher to buy clothes/ winter related items
- Crisis Support Fund – fast tracking families to access Brent and Barnardo's Crisis Support funds
- Baby Bundles - a partnership with Little Village to provide vulnerable new birth families with access to items for newborns and in some cases a Moses basket for baby to sleep in
- Too Good to Go – food vouchers worth £15 were given to vulnerable families to enable them to access food via the Too Good to Go app. Approximately 200 vouchers were given out bi-monthly. Note, this support offer has ended.

2.1.2 Children and Families Information and Outreach Service

2.1.2.1 The Children and Families Information and Outreach Service for 0 – 19 (up to 25 for young people with SEND) are co-located at the FWC. The CFiS provides information, advice and outreach, offers a brokerage service to families struggling to access early education and childcare. CFiS also offers a range of community facing support services, including in partnership with Inclusion Services and Public Health, promoting the importance of the first 1001 days to families and partner organisations in the borough.

2.1.2.2 In addition, Chrysalis deliver a monthly online drop-in session for families impacted by domestic abuse. Chrysalis is funded by the LA to bridge the gap between professionals and survivors of domestic abuse. The following services are available:

- Bowling & Co. – Solicitors
- Brent Housing – DA housing officers
- Asian Women's Resource Centre
- PLIAS resettlement (Phoenix project) – IDVA support for African/ Caribbean women and girls.

2.1.3 Parenting support

2.1.3.1 Parenting support is an integral part of the FWC service offer and focuses on equipping parents with the skills, knowledge and confidence to support their CYP wellbeing and development. The FWC deliver a diverse suite of accredited parenting programmes and support ranging from universal through to more specialist provision to support parents at differing ages and stages of their children's development and level of need.

2.1.3.2 Parents who have English as an additional language are supported through translation services, facilitators who speak community languages, and resources i.e. parenting manuals

being available in different languages. A creche also runs alongside the programme to enable access for parents with young children.

2.1.3.3 The FWCs offer workshops that provide parents with a 'taster' session in advance of attending the full programme and is a good way of generating interest. These workshops focus on topics suitable for parents of toddlers right through to parents of adolescents. The main issues parents request support with and where positive outcomes are achieved include setting boundaries, behaviour management, conflict between parents and/ or CYP (particularly teenagers), positive approaches to discipline, poor communication, having unrealistic expectations of their CYP (high or low), parent self-care and emotional literacy.



Figure 3: Dads completing SFSC parenting programme at Willow FWC

2.1.3.4 During the year the parenting offer expanded to meet the increased demand for Cygnet programme delivery. The co-facilitation of the programme with school partners on school sites has been a particular success.

2.1.3.5 The Generation Parent Management Training Oregon (GEN PMTO), delivered by Barnardo's, continued during the year. The programme (typically delivered over 14 weeks) is aimed at parents where children aged between 8-14 years old are at risk of serious youth crime or developing a behaviour problem and/ or where these have already begun. The programme provides parents with effective tools to reduce coercive interactions with the aim that this will lead to improved children's mental health and wellbeing and reduce crime, violence, and anti-social behaviour. Recruitment to the programme was slower than anticipated despite ongoing promotion and outreach to universal and targeted providers which had minimal impact at increasing numbers. Funding for the programme came to an end 31 March 2026 and will not continue in the new reporting period.

2.1.4 Dads programme

2.1.4.1 The dads programme was relaunched in February 2025 and has successfully expanded during the year and includes:

- Fathers Fun Fridays - provides a relaxed space for dads to bond with their children through fun activities and positive shared experiences

- New Dads parenting programme - builds new fathers' confidence and skills, helping them feel more supported and engaged in their parenting role
- Dads' activities/ trips - offers opportunities for dads to connect with their children and create positive experiences while reducing isolation
- Dads peer-to-peer support network - enables dads to share experiences, offer support, and build a sense of community with one another
- Dads WhatsApp messaging group - keeps dads connected, informed, and supported through regular communication and shared opportunities.



Figure 4: Dads Fun Fridays at Willesden Sports Centre

2.1.4.2 The Dads Programme recognises the key role that Dads play in their children's upbringing and development. Dads can often be less heard from, an overlooked group when working with families due to for example systemic biases, workplace pressures and social stereotypes. The Dads programme aims to engage more dads to access activities and support across the FWC network and be a champion for dad's inclusion in family support work.

2.1.4.3 Feedback from Dads

'I really enjoy special time with my daughter and taking her to activities at the centre, which she really enjoys.'

'I was reluctant to attend a parenting course, but I'm glad I did as I learnt a lot and met other dads going through the same issues'

2.1.5 Toy Library

2.1.5.1 Each FWC has a toy library where families can borrow up to 3 toys for 2 weeks at a time at zero cost. The offer expanded to address local needs and include more toys for SEND and older age CYP.

2.1.6 BookTrust Storytime

2.1.6.1 In partnership with the Library Service the Booktrust Storytime programme is delivered across the FWC giving out free books to families, encouraging parents to read with their children and registering with the libraries and FWC. Families are signposted to events at the libraries and FWC.

2.1.7 Parents As First Teachers (PAFT)

2.1.7.1 The PAFT programme is now well embedded and supports parents with children pre-birth to 5-years with home learning environments. The research-based home-visiting programmes aims to enhance child development, parent to child interaction, family wellbeing and achievement through weekly planned activities. The programme supports FWC and families with school readiness outcomes including for example toilet training, speech, language, communication needs, social and physical development. The 3 PAFT practitioners deliver group sessions at the FWC and jointly co-facilitate some sessions with FWC staff. The PAFT programme has supported 323 families to achieve positive outcomes and impact as evidenced by the pre and post intervention questionaries (data available upon request), including for example:

- School ready – more children are ready when they go to school or nursery equipped with the skills to help them learn and engage with the curriculum
- Secure attachment – more children have improved emotional regulation, resilience and know healthy ways to interact with others
- Improved children's physical development and wellbeing
- Improved parenting capacity – leading to children's better sleep, independent toileting and fine motor coordination and reducing stress for parents
- Early detection – educated parents are better equipped to identify changes in their children's development, leading to the early identification of potential SEND and/ or other issues
- Improved partnership working with schools, nurseries, health services, who refer families into the programme, leading to improved engagement and take-up with wider FWC support services.

2.1.8 Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL)

2.1.8.1 REAL is a research-evidence based programme designed to support children's early literacy development by buildings parents' confidence at home. It uses everyday activities to foster a lifelong love of reading and writing aimed at families with children 3-5 years old from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is 1 REAL practitioner, and training has been delivered to early years settings including the FWC. The REAL programme has supported families to achieve many positive outcomes and impact, including for example:

- School readiness outcomes
- Children's improved cognitive development
- Children's speech, language and communication
- Children's social skills
- Narrows the achievement gap for socio-economic disadvantaged children
- Leading to better academic achievement, improved emotional well-being, increase in problem-solving skills and greater socioeconomic success later in life.

2.1.9 SEND support

2.1.9.1 The centres are inclusive to families with SEND children and specialist support and services include for example:

- CAMHS under 5s service
- PAIRs 0-2s service

- Specialist parenting programmes – Cygnet/ Plus and Stepping Stones
- Supporting Assessment for Autism Route (STAAR) – this service ended March 2026
- Deaf and Hearing Impairment service
- Visual Impairment service
- Parent peer-support group on Saturday mornings
- Deaf parent peer support group
- Family sign class
- Brent Parent Carer Forum.

2.1.9.2 The wider FWC service offer is also accessible and for example CAB, targeted early help, and the triage service all support SEND families. The FWC promote the Brent local offer and SEND navigators connect families into appropriate support and/ or refer onto other agencies depending on need. FWC staff identify children with potential SEND issues early who are then supported and/ or signposted to specialist services.

2.1.10 Young Carers Support

2.1.10.1 Brent Carers Centre are the commissioned provider for Young Carers support in Brent and there are strong links with the FWC. The service offers a range of support for Young Carers including young carers activities at Family Hubs and holiday activities. In the last twelve months this has included trips to Gordon Brown outdoor centre and arts activities with a voluntary sector provider.

2.1.10.2 Brent Carers Centre, in partnership with Early Help offer outreach events at schools to increase identification of young carers. In response to feedback from young carers, a pilot series of sessions were held at Harlesden library to offer a study space for young carers.

2.1.10.3 A training offer is delivered through the Brent safeguarding partnership to support multi-agency practitioners to understand the importance of safeguarding young carers. Brent Carers Centre identified 132 new young carers during 2025-26.

2.1.11 Housing

2.1.11.1 During the year a pilot took place with Housing Services to introduce housing surgeries across the FWC. The purpose was to provide accessible, housing related information and advice in community settings, to help ensure families are better informed about housing processes, application pathways and available support services. Intended outcomes are to strengthen families understanding of housing pathways, support earlier intervention of need/ risk, reduce the number of families approaching housing without the appropriate information and reducing potential homelessness. The housing surgeries are now embedded and delivered across the FWC network. An external evaluator has been commissioned by Housing Services to explore the impact of this work on reducing homelessness and will be reported in the next period.

2.1.12 Youth Justice Service (YJS)

2.1.12.1 YJS can meet with young people/ families at the FWC, subject to appropriate risk assessments, and refer family members to the wider service offer, including for example parenting support, mentors, health services and CAB. FWC also host young people for reparation activity and this has been successful at some centres and plans are to extend this offer next reporting year.

2.1.13 Early Help Resource Panel

2.1.13.1 Lead Professionals, including, EYWs, FSAs, Key Workers and Social Workers can present cases to a monthly multi-agency Early Help Resource Panel to request additional services for a family and/ or benefit from a multi-agency discussion regarding the case.

2.1.13.2 The purpose of the Early Help Resource Panel is:

- to support Lead Professionals to provide effective preventative early help to families
- for member agencies to agree and commit resources on behalf of their agency to respond to the needs of families
- to inform the commissioning of goods and services, such as counselling, mentoring, befriending, within the early help service to support families
- to monitor and agree services commissioned within the early help service to target services appropriately and ensure there is sufficient provision through-out the year.

2.1.13.3 Responsibility for the Early Help Resource Panel moved to Family Support Teams from April 2026.

2.1.14 Family Financial Resilience programme

2.1.14.1 The Family Financial Resilience Partnership is a Greater London Authority-funded programme designed to help low-income families with children access free, high-quality social welfare advice so that their income meets their everyday needs. The programme has three main objectives:

- supporting low-income families with children to maximise their income by accessing their benefit entitlements
- supporting low-income families with children to access emergency financial support when they cannot afford essentials
- supporting low-income families with children to reduce their financial hardship and material deprivation by addressing advice on wider social welfare issues – such as immigration, employment, childcare support and housing.

2.1.14.2 Brent was one of twelve London boroughs to receive funding and is delivered through the FWC. The programme works in partnership with two leading advice networks -London Legal Support Trust and London Citizens Advice to provide expert income maximisation advice covering themes such as welfare, debt, housing, childcare, disability, immigration, and employment.

2.1.14.3 Advisors focus on what matters most to families experiencing financial hardship, offering tailored support to improve financial resilience. Given this reporting period is to March 2025, only 2 months of delivery had taken place, but early indicators have shown a positive outcomes and impact on families, including:

- Increasing/ maximising income
- Reducing debt
- Securing immigration status
- Securing housing
- Improved engagement with other FWC support services
- Improved mental health and wellbeing
- Reduced stress related to financial worries/ pressures.

2.1.14.4 Phase 1 of the programme is now well established at some FWC and will expand across the FWC in 2026-27. It is expected that the programme will continue until December 2027, subject

to funding confirmation. The programme launched mid-February 2026 and at the time of writing had supported 179 families, which is the 3rd highest of the 12 Local Authority's participating. The next phase will include delivering training to front line practitioners on Financial First Aid. Plans are developing to expand the service as advice capacity increases with CAB and improve access to Harrow Law Centre

2.2 Community/Voluntary/Faith Sector delivery

2.2.1 Barnardo's partnership

Barnardo's are commissioned to provide several support services that support the FWC delivery model, including crèche provision, volunteering programme, Family Support Assistants and Early Years workers. Barnardo's bring added and social value benefits to vulnerable families including for example, the donation and distribution of white goods, mobile devices and data, gifts for children, food donations, access to social trips, a crisis support fund, and support for refugees.

2.2.1.1 Early Years Workers

Early Years workers plan and deliver targeted early years focused interventions and group work, such as accredited parenting programmes, Let's Talk sessions supporting children's language development, and advice on infant feeding. Early Years workers help to identify children with additional needs early and quickly, connecting them into appropriate support services. They work closely with the rest of the FWC team to ensure there is a seamless service for vulnerable families. They make welfare calls to identified vulnerable families to check-in on them, promote FWC registration and encourage take-up of services and support.

2.2.1.2 Family Support Assistants (FSA)

FSA work closely with the Triage Officers and Key Workers to support vulnerable families to access universal services. They offer family befriending and support, facilitate group work, and deliver accredited parenting programmes and other interventions. They complete outreach and home visits to vulnerable families who are not able to access FWC services on site. They make welfare calls to identified vulnerable families to check-in on them, promote registration and encourage take-up of services.

2.2.1.3 Volunteer programme

Barnardo's delivers a volunteer programme that includes a Volunteer Coordinator. There are over 20 volunteers that support the work of the FWC. Most volunteer during term-time. Volunteers support FWC with for example administration, the crèche, promoting activities and services, registering families, English conversation groups, delivering parenting programmes and other interventions. The aim is for each FWC to have a minimum of 3 volunteers allocated to provide additional support, including a Parent Champion.

2.2.1.4 Parent Champions

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) funded a Parent Champions programme using volunteer parents on the premise they are best placed to support other parents to find out about childcare choices and services for families with children of all ages, but particularly focused on families with children over 10 years old.

The Parent Champions have been supporting the FWC with outreach to refugee new arrivals, homeless families, those in temporary accommodation in local hotels to promote FWC registration and take-up of services. During the year there were on average 10 active Parent

Champions who reached over 750 parents. Using this approach can be an effective way to build trust, bridge gaps, and empower families. Parent Champions lived experience and community knowledge are key to reaching families who might otherwise remain disengaged.

The Parent Champion programme has achieved many positive outcomes including for example:

- helping to strengthen community relationships
- increasing families awareness around key safeguarding and wellbeing issues such as gang, knife crime, and online harm/ safety
- reducing isolation and creating peer-to-peer support networks via WhatsApp groups
- accessing 'hard to reach' families and connecting them FWC support services
- volunteer development - Parent Champions gain personal confidence, improve their skills and access to training, helping them to progress into employment.

The Parent Champion programme ended on 31 March 2026 with cessation of the funding from the VRU. Parent Champions were incorporated within the Barnardo's volunteer programme detailed above and will continue to support the FWC as part of this programme.

2.2.1.5 Crèche provision

Barnardo's delivers a crèche service including a crèche coordinator and as and when staff to provide crèches to support programme delivery. For example, crèches are run alongside parenting programmes and other group work to increase accessibility to parents.

2.2.2 Felix food programme

The majority of the FWC receive food donations via the Felix project and food items were donated to families equating to 50,000+ meals during the year. The number of families accessing the offer is not known given how the food and items are distributed. Some FWC also receive non-food items from Felix such as toys, clothes and household items which are donated to families. The impact is that families are supported with the cost-living crisis and lead healthier lifestyles by having access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The project runs during school holiday periods supporting low-income families who would otherwise have access to free school meals during term time.

2.2.3 Little Village

Little Village supports families with babies and children under five living in poverty across Brent. They run a baby bank network, collecting, sorting and passing on pre-loved clothes and equipment. Parents are also supported by a dedicated signposting and guidance team, who offer advice and links to other services including the FWC. FWC refer families to Little Village and vice-versa, FWC collect and donate clothes and equipment to Little Village and refer families with new babies to receive Baby Bundle packs which includes items such as sleeping baskets, blankets, bibs, muslin cloths, nappies, changing mats, wipes and toiletries.

Table 2: Little Village work in Brent

Project	What's on offer?	No.
Wembley Central Hub	Referred families choose items from LV Brent shop	581
Direct delivery	Referred families receive items delivered to their door	552
Bundles in Partnership	Clothing & essentials via FWC and other specialist settings	197

Emergency newborn packs	Available in all maternity units serving Brent families	20
Signposting	Signposting families to FWC and other support service	215
Play Packs	Age matched toy and book packs delivered to families via FWC & CFiS Play Pack Events	320 4

The project has many positive outcomes and impact on families, including for example:

- Reducing poverty-related barriers to development
- Supporting parents as first educators
- Increasing engagement with FWC
- Improving school readiness Good Level of Development (GLD)
- Increased engagement and take-up of service e following the practical support offered.

2.2.4 Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF)

The FWC have strong links with BPCF and include for example:

- FWC staff attend workshops held by BPCF to promote the FWC and Early Help offers
- FWC via Start for Life funding provided resources to BPCF to set-up a toy library with specialist SEND toys to support families impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and to expand the reach of the FWC toy libraries
- FWC supported BPCF to run day trips to the seaside over the summer so SEND families could get away from the city and give children new experiences, network with other families and find out about other services and support
- FWC host SEND themed stay and play/ peer support sessions on rotation on Saturday mornings during term-time
- FWC host yoga for young children, including SEND children, and families have reported positive outcomes regulating children's behaviour.

2.2.5 Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)

Some FWC host providers funded by HAF to deliver diversionary activities to CYP over Easter, Christmas and summer school holiday periods. The FWC would like to host more HAF providers, however in general the FWC buildings/ rooms do not lend themselves to sports activities or large groups.

2.2.6 Advance

Advance supports women and CYP affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) x2 Children's and x2 Adult workers receive referrals from Early Help practitioners and are co-located at the FWC. represent their voice at a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), helping them to navigate the criminal justice process, and work with different agencies to provide wraparound support. They support domestic abuse victims to:

- become safe and rebuild their lives
- improve mental health and wellbeing
- address the impact of trauma and ACES

- improve family dynamics and communication
- reduce demand for more costly statutory support.

2.2.7 Shaw Trust - Connexions

Shaw Trust Connexions (Brent Youth Futures) service is collocated at the FWC and supports vulnerable young people 16 to 18 years (up to 25 for those with SEND) with:

- One-to-one careers guidance to help define personal interests and career paths
- Employability training, such as CV writing, application support, and interview preparation.
- Access to opportunities by making referrals for apprenticeships, traineeships, and training programmes.
- Intensive Mentoring, including confidence building, cognitive behavioural mentoring and resilience coaching.

The impact is to reduce the number of young people NEET leading to better futures.

2.2.8 Citizens Advice Brent (CAB)

CAB advisors are present at each of the FWC one day per week via an appointment-based system. Families can be seen at any of the FWC and can access support via telephone and webchat. CAB has achieved many positive outcomes and impact on families, including for example:

- Income maximisation
- Reducing debt
- Securing immigration status
- Supporting with employment matters
- Securing accommodation and avoiding homelessness
- Connecting families into other support services
- Reducing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

2.2.9 Faith sector

Work has progressed to develop stronger partnerships with the faith sector. This has included for example working with Daniel's Den, a Christian VCFS provider, who delivers parent and toddler groups in community settings across Brent. FWC promote Daniel's Den activities and vice-versa. Staff from the FWC have attended Daniel's Den sessions to promote FWC engagement, deliver key public health messages and strengthen partnerships.

Other work with the faith sector has included for example training practitioners from faith groups to deliver accredited parenting programmes, co-facilitating programmes with faith group and council staff and faith groups distributing publicity and other information.

As part of the Start for Life programme small grants were given out to VCFS partners to promote the FWC and Start for Life programmes to encourage take-up of services and support.

Plans are progressing to map the faith sector, who offer a wider range of family support services in community-based settings across Brent, and link these services into the wider early help support network. This work links to the Gather Movement bringing together 8,000 churches and charities who are working in partnership to transform local communities.

2.3 Health delivery

2.3.1 Public Health

There is effective integrated working with Public Health and the FWC who are involved in the front-line delivery of many public health projects and health messaging including:

- Healthy Start - distribute vitamins and £20 food vouchers to vulnerable families. This programme will stop moving into the new reporting period.
- UNICEF – FWC are Level 3 Bably Friendly accredited, there are breast feeding champions and clinics at each FWC, breastfeeding is promoted including access to specialist support
- Parenting programmes – FWC staff and Health Visitors co-deliver the HENRY Antenatal and Getting It Right (0-5) programme
- Period Dignity – FWC distribute period products from Hey Girls
- WellComm – St Raphael's FWC has piloted the new WellComm model to improve speech, language and communication and the model will be rolled out across all FWC
- Support play and child development – via stay and play activities, outdoor play areas, environmental projects, Busy Feet, using musical instruments
- School Readiness – supporting outcomes in this key area – SLT, toilet training, self-feeding
- Vaccine Clinics – FWC host vaccine catch-up clinics and are involved in joint promotional work in areas where there is low vaccine take-up
- Oral Health – promote good oral health and Harlesden Dentist access pilot project to encourage more families to register young children with a dentist.
- Obesity - promote healthy lifestyles, host Busy Feet and BeeZee families, link families to the Weight Management Service
- Healthy Eating – delivered in partnership with Brent Start, give out free fruit and vegetables via the Felix programme
- Health Review/Safeguarding Clinics are hosted at the FWC
- Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting (MECSH) and Infant 2 school programmes are promoted by the FWC staff and the programmes are delivered in the FWC
- CAMHS and PAIRS services are hosted at the FWC
- Sleep – FWC promote safe sleep environments, baby sleep needs by age, tips for better sleep, Developing Good Bedtime Routines workshop, Being With Your Baby workshop, parenting programmes, Stay and Play sessions, link into Safer Sleep Week (March), PAFT practitioners, promote online sleep resources.
- Asthma Community Coaches – FWC staff have been identified as Asthma Community Coaches, training for staff is to take place, staff are to signpost families to appropriate support where applicable
- Screen Time – FWC promote government guidelines regarding screen time for under 5's
- Parenting support – including access to specialist SEND programmes
- Early Years Free Entitlement – FWC and Early Years staff call eligible families to promote take-up
- New Births – FWC staff make calls to new birth families to promote FWC registration, service offer and engagement
- 019 Services are co-located at the FWC
- 0-19 Service - offer an antenatal support clinic – FWC staff attend the monthly online workshops to promote the FWC offer, registration and service engagement
- Integrated 2-year checks – plans are developing for FWC staff to complete the integrated 2-year checks in partnership with Health Visitors

- Early Help (including FWC and Early Years staff) contribute to Public Health outreach across Brent (i.e. community days, oral health bus, etc).

2.3.2 Infant to School programme

FWCs connects families into the Infant to School programme and vice-versa. Infant to School is delivered by Nursery Nurses from the Health Visiting team who are co-located at the FWC. The evidence-based programme targets vulnerable children from 3 months to 4-years and brings specialist knowledge in child and family health to help support children's development and their physical and emotional wellbeing, as well as parents. Nursery Nurses give guidance on practical issues and link families to other useful health and family support services, parenting groups and other activity at the FWC.

Infant to School has supported families to achieve positive outcomes by improving:

- Parenting capacity
- Children's cognitive development
- Children's speech, language and communication
- Children's social skills and physical development

The impact is more children are school ready and parenting capacity and family wellbeing are improved.

2.3.3 Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting (MECSH)

MESCH evidence-based programme is part of the health visiting service and is offered to vulnerable families during pregnancy up to the child's 2nd birthday. A Health Visitor is paired with a family to build a strong and trusted relationship. MESCH includes regular home visits, personalised support, practical guidance and connecting families into local community services including the FWC.

MESCH has supported families to achieve positive outcomes by improving:

- parental mental health and confidence
- child development, communication and oral health
- creating safer home environments.

The impact is more children are school ready and parenting capacity and family wellbeing are improved.

2.3.4 Infant Feeding

Infant feeding clinics have been delivered across all FWCs during the year. The clinics are free and available to all families living in Brent. The clinics are supported by Health Visitors and a Lactation Consultant who can tackle more serious concerns. The Health Visiting service has trained twelve peer-to-peer breastfeeding champions who support breastfeeding work across the FWCs. This and other work to promote breastfeeding has led to an increase in breastfeeding rates across Brent. The FWC were reaccredited to November 2027 with the NICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) Stage 3. Accreditation confirms that health services (maternity, neonatal, health visiting and children's centres) have fully implemented sustainable standards to support breastfeeding and relationship building.

2.3.5 Period Dignity

The FWC give out free period products to women and girls via a Public Health funded project with Hey Girls. Hey Girls, are a social enterprise who aim to eradicate period poverty in the UK, improve access to quality products, and increase education around period health and eliminate shame.

2.3.6 GPs

Partnership working with GPs has progressed significantly this year and some of the new initiatives in development with the FWC are outlined below:

- Child Health Hubs - clinics run by paediatricians and GPs from local surgeries which see children face-to-face. We have ensured that the Child Health Hub GPs are aware of the FWCs offer, so that suitable patients can be referred directly and we have mapped FWCs against the Child Health Hubs, so every GP knows which FWC covers their area.
- FWC staff representatives now attend the Child Health Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) and GPs report their input on often complex cases has been invaluable. FWCs are made aware of vulnerable families who may not typically register with the FWC, or take-up services or support, and can use the information from MDTs to reach out to families, helping to reduce barriers to accessing services. Parent Champions were used to contact less heard from families and complete outreach in specific communities with the aim of increasing take-up of FWC services.
- The work and role of the FWCs are promoted to GPs in lunch and learn sessions, primary care network (PCN) meetings and in GP training. We have created an easy referral route via email and have piloted the Joy App to onboard the FWCs to make referrals simpler.
- We have collated all children's services in the Brent Happy and Healthy Child Directory, which has been distributed to patients and GPs and includes contact details for all FWC.
- GPs have developed a new Locally Enhanced Service a comprehensive biopsychosocial health check for children aged 6–10, screening for mental and physical health concerns as well as social factors (using WWHAM questions: household, finances, food security, etc). GPs are encouraged to refer families identified through this check to the FWC.
- CYP community link workers have been recruited who operate across the Brent and support families facing social determinants of health. They have been helping to register more families with the FWCs.

Additional initiatives in the pipeline include:

- A GP trainee is leading a quality improvement project to identify and support young carers, using GP records to flag potential carers and invite them to support events at their local FWC which the GP will also attend
- Local paediatricians have expressed interest in running clinics for children and families who are frequent A&E attenders for non-urgent issues with the aim of hosting these clinics within FWCs
- FWC are keen to offer some services resources permitting at GP Surgeries where space permits, for example such as accredited parenting programmes, stay and play sessions, registering families for FWC services, with the aim of strengthening partnership working between GP and FWC.

Neighbourhood working in health hubs will continue to develop in the new reporting year.

2.3.7 Brent Health Matters

The FWC work in partnership with Brent Health Matters, including Community Connectors. The aim is to tackle health inequalities by bringing healthcare and wellbeing support into local communities, targeting residents who traditionally struggle to access health services due to language or cultural barriers. Brent Health Matters service include:

- Asthma Community Coaches – FWC Community Champions have been trained to help families manage childhood asthma and use inhalers correctly.
- Community Champions - A network of local volunteers who help design public services and spread vital health messages among the borough's diverse communities. The volunteer programme has been promoted families accessing the FWC.
- Outreach & Advice - They employ dedicated health inequalities pharmacists and provide community grants of up to £10,000 to local charities and organizations to support residents
- Community Health Pods - Self-service pods in local libraries and community centres where residents can check their blood pressure, weight, and heart rate, with abnormal results sent directly to their GP. These could be hosted at FWC during the next reporting period.

The impact of the service has been to help reduce health inequalities across Brent and improve health outcomes for families.

2.3.8 Parent and Infant Relationship Service (PAIRS) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

The PAIRS has expanded across the FWC network and is now well embedded reaching more families in need. The PAIRS team offers support for families with mild to moderate perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship concerns. The service covers pregnant women and families at risk of mild to moderate mental health problems, who are receiving support via maternity, health visiting, school nursing and council services. The service extends to fathers and co-parents and the overall familial relationship with the infant, with the infant remaining the focus of the work. PAIRS supports families with 0–2-year-olds and works seamlessly with CAMHs who focus on families with 3–5-year-olds. There is a single point of referral and families are triaged and connected into the appropriate service depending on need.

2.3.9 Midwifery Services

Midwifery services from Imperial College Healthcare Trust and London Northwest Healthcare Trust (LNWH) are collocated at the FWC. The midwives provide comprehensive antenatal and postnatal care to families at the FWC. Having families attend the FWC for antenatal appointments is key to engaging parents early, breaking down barriers to access and developing trusted relationships with staff at the centres so they continue to access support after the cessation of midwifery services.

2.4 National initiatives

2.4.1 Family First Partnership Programme

The Early Help and Social Care department embarked on a new redesign programme to better support more holistic, joined up working and ensure we have a modern, fit-for-purpose service model, in line with the Government's Families First reform programme. A set of key design principles underpinning the development of the model were adopted as follows:

- Ensure that Children and Young People are at the centre of everything we do

- Reduction in silo-working between departments
- Minimising and streamlining handover points between teams
- Minimise assessments and duplication for children and families
- Create greater opportunities for shared learning and experience building between teams
- Greater consistency for children and families
- Increase practitioners' capacity to build strong relationships with children and families
- Supporting the recruitment and retention of Key Workers and Social Workers
- Improving the experience of Children and Families engaging with the Early Help and Social Care services.

The new delivery model went live on 2 June 2025. Key Workers moved from the FWC to form new teams at the Civic Centre and Willesden Library but retain links to their respective FWC.

2.4.2 Reducing Parental Conflict

Funding for the DWP Reducing Parental Conflict programme provides relationship support for families ranging from universal to specialist interventions. Brent received £38k during the financial year and this was used to:

- raise awareness of the negative impact of intense and sustained parental conflict on child outcomes via a multiagency training programme
- online resources are available from the Council's parenting website to support families and practitioners with parental conflict
- Triage workers deliver the Triple P Family Transitions parenting programme and use this in their day-to-day work with parents in conflict
- 1-to-1 support is also available for parents having challenges with co-parenting related issues.

2.4.3 Family Hubs and Best Start for Life

The Start for Life programme puts Family Hubs as the key delivery point for integrating support services from maternity through the early years. Local Family Hub networks consist of both physical and virtual places where services to support families come together, from birth registration to midwifery, health visiting, to mental health support, and parenting courses, to infant feeding advice, parent/ carer forums and promoting the offer. This work links to the Brent Early Years Strategy and Best Start in Life local delivery plan 2026-2029 as detailed in section 1.6.



Figure 5: Baby Massage at Church Lane FWC

This Government programme helps to ensure the best support is available to families in the first 1,001 days, identified within the report as 6 priority action areas, has made significant progress in Brent and met delivery plan targets as agreed with the DfE. The programme was funded until March 2026 and transitions into the new Best Start Family Hub and Healthy Babies programme from 2026, with funding committed until March 2029.

2.4.4 Neighbourhood Health

The government aims to put a 'neighbourhood health service' at the heart of its vision for the NHS. The programme aims to help people live well in their local communities and reduce their need for care delivered in hospitals. It involves multi-disciplinary teams across health social care and CVFS working together to promote prevention, manage long-term conditions and keep communities independent. In Brent this has included establishing Child Health Hubs and Child Health Multi-Disciplinary Teams. An overview of how the FWC link to this work is detailed in section 2.3.6.

3. Current Challenges and Key Priorities 2026/27

3.1 Families continue to present at the FWC significantly impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. Families are triaged and connected into appropriate support as quickly as possible. The Triage service links families into Brent's Crisis Response Fund and Barnardo's Poverty and Cost of Living Crisis Fund that provides direct, practical relief to vulnerable families. This includes for example supermarket vouchers, gas/electricity top-ups, and essential household items like beds and bedding.

3.2 To support sustainable staffing arrangements within hub settings work is progressing to ensure that links between the new Family Support Teams and FWCs remains strong and families are connected into the wider early help offer. New posts, such as Best Start Inclusion Practitioners, at the FWC will be created using Best Start Family Hub funding and this will help to increase staffing numbers.

3.3 Given the high number of partnerships involved increases the complexity of the operational delivery model. This includes at times for example resource limitations, time lags, communication issues or conflicting agency agendas. Strong governance arrangements at strategic and operational levels help to ensure that multi-agency partnership working is effective, issues are addressed as and when they arise and escalated for more senior input when necessary.

3.4 The FWC improvement priorities for 2026/27 are:

1. Deliver year 1 of the Best Start in Life, Family Hub and Healthy Babies programme and rebrand the FWC to Best Start Family Hubs. Working in partnership with multi-agency stakeholders towards achieving the DfE targets of 76% Good Level of Development and 79% take-up of Early Years Free Entitlement by 2029
2. Expand the out of hours delivery model, including access to support via telephone and video appointments, using a hybrid delivery approach
3. Support the development of wider system reforms including the Family First Partnership programme, SEND, Early Years and Working in Neighbourhoods (WiN)
4. Expand the Family Financial Resilience programme and deliver Financial First Aid training to multi-agency front line practitioners

5. Complete capital transformation works to St Raphaels, Preston Park and Willow FWC. Develop plans for the new Granville FWC that is being constructed as part of the South Kilburn regeneration programme.

4. Building and Resources

4.1 There are ongoing low level maintenance issues with the FWC buildings that are addressed via the contract with Facilities Management and capital funding. Cleaning, gardening and window cleaning services are included as part of the Facilities Management contract. Separate arrangements via the school partnership MoU are in place for Curzon Crescent and Fawood FWC. The FWC building priorities for 2026/27 are:

- The plant room at St Raphael's FWC will have a heat pump installed and this will require temporary closure of the FWC to accommodate the works.
- In July 2026 Granville FWC moved into temporary accommodation, the old adjacent Brent Start building. A new permanent site for Granville FWC will be built linked to local area regeneration plans in South Kilburn. It is anticipated the FWC will be hosted at the temporary site for at least 2 years.
- The outside play area at Preston Park FWC will be upgraded and officers are aiming to secure additional space to maximise the garden footprint
- Willow Nursery will have an awning installed to enable greater access to outside space by the children. Some internal reconfiguration of rooms is required to facilitate an increase in childcare places. Air conditioning needs to be installed in first floor rooms subject to sufficient capital funding being available.

5. Service user feedback

5.1 Service user feedback and engagement with families is used to co-produce the FWC delivery model to ensure that services and support offered actively engages families and meets their wide-ranging needs.

5.2 A Parent Carer Voice Forum meets regularly to ensure there was a strong parent voice in shaping the offer. Parents were recruited with children at different ages and stages, children with SEND, dads, and pregnant parents to ensure a diverse group and a wide range of views are captured.

5.3 Parents are involved with FWC local governance arrangements and are represented on the LSG.

5.4 A management board has been established at Willow Nursery and FWC including parent representatives.

Appendix 1

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">FWC core service offer</th></tr>
<tr><td>

HEALTH

- Antenatal and maternity care
- Infant feeding support
- Health visiting
- School nursing
- Oral health improvement
- Speech and language development
- General health, registering with GP, information on local hospitals
- Keeping fit and active
- Nutrition, weight management, healthy cooking
- Information on common childhood illnesses
- Immunisations
- Parent-Infant Relationships and Perinatal Mental Health Support
- Mental health services (beyond Start for Life parent-infant mental health)
- Healthy Start vitamin project
- Stop smoking support

PARENTS AND CARERS SUPPORT

- Dads/ Male Carers support
- Employment, including getting ready for work, (CV writing, job searches)
- Adult education i.e. ESOL and Maths courses
- Debt and welfare advice (claiming benefits, debt management, budgeting)
- Housing advice (homelessness, renting)
- Legal advice (immigration, employment, marital)
- Parent / Carer emotional wellbeing

</td><td>

EDUCATION

- Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and financial support (Tax-Free Childcare, Universal Credit childcare)
- Early Language and the Home Learning Environment
- Applying for a school place
- Starting school
- Transitions
- Improving school attendance
- Homework clubs
- Education, employment support for young people (13-16, 16+)
- Activities for early years/ primary and secondary
- Support for families with children with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (SEND)

FAMILY SUPPORT

- Parenting programmes
- Workshops on setting routines and boundaries
- Staying safe on computers, phones and at home
- Relationship support
- Support for separating and separated parents and their children
- Intensive targeted family support services, including those funded by the Supporting Families programme
- Substance (alcohol/ drug) misuse support
- Youth Justice services
- Youth services - universal and targeted
- Domestic abuse support (adults and children)
- Parents as First Teachers (PAFT)

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