Our North Tyneside
Best Start in Life
Strategic Action Plan

2026–2029



North Tyneside Council

BEST START IN LIFE

Introduction to Best Start in Life

The Best Start in Life programme is a national initiative that brings together support for families from pregnancy through the early years.

Best Start Family Hubs will offer a welcoming place where you can get health advice, parenting support, early learning activities and help with your child's development, all in a way that's easier to access and more joined up.

We want every child in North Tyneside to have the very best start in life, to be healthy, happy, safe and ready to learn when they start school.

We know that the early years shape everything that follows. This plan sets out how North Tyneside Council and our partners will work together to support families, strengthen services, reduce inequalities and make sure help is easy to find and easy to access.

This plan belongs to all of us:

- North Tyneside's Children's Services (Education, Health and Social Care)
- Public Health
- Health partners
- Early Years providers
- Family Hubs
- Community groups
- Schools
- Voluntary organisations

20% of the population



100% of the future

Our vision for children and young people in North Tyneside is:

"Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or disabled are ready for school, ready for work and life, cared for and supported"

Our North Tyneside
Best Start in Life action plan

Did you know...

- Children and young people make up around 20% of North Tyneside's population
- Early development matters most, what happens before age two shapes a child's future
- 4,305 children in North Tyneside live in low-income households
- Early help and strong relationships make the biggest difference to long-term outcomes

This action plan sets out how we will support families, strengthen early years services, and make it easier for every child to get the best possible start.



North Tyneside Council's Best Start Strategic action plan aligns to the Best Start in Life ambition in Our North Tyneside Council Plan and the priorities in the Children and Young People's plan.

What this means for North Tyneside

86.6%

of our 2-3 year old are meeting key milestones and are above the national average.

Two thirds of children are "school ready".

66.9%

achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) at Reception.

But there's a fairness gap. For children eligible for free school meals,

45.2%

reach GLD.
Meaning we need to focus more support where it will matter most.

North Tyneside Council has

3 Family Hubs and

6 community hubs - welcoming places to find activities, advice and early help.

Currently we have

1,100 students up to year 6 who have an EHCP

Of those babies who are exclusively breastfed at day 10,

97% are still exclusively breastfed at six weeks.

Our ambition is clear for 2028

To hit the minimum local GLD target of

77.1%

for our reception-age children. We need around 210 more children to reach GLD (and 48 more among children eligible for free school meals).

Based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025

North Tyneside ranks

145 out of **296**

lower tier local authorities in England.

However, just under 20% of these areas are ranked as being in the most deprived 20% in England

Immunisations are a real strength

MMR uptake is high

96.3% at age 2 and

92.6% at age 5,

both well above the England average.

New birth and 6-8 week assessment are above national averages; ASQ 3* completion is very high

97.4%

*Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Third Edition.

Of the 6,446

children with SEND, the largest group have speech language and communication needs. This reinforces the importance of a focus on the development of early language skills

Out of a 0–19 population of 45,886

12,995

children aged 0–5

in North Tyneside, with higher need in some neighbourhoods, so place based support matters.

What our families are telling us

Through ongoing consultation, families across North Tyneside have shared their experiences with us. They said:

What families value

- Friendly, supportive staff
- Local drop-ins and clinics
- Safe and welcoming spaces
- Free and fun activities
- Social opportunities for children and parents

What feels hard

- Not always knowing what's on offer
- Confusion about which hub does what
- Travel and parking difficulties
- Not enough SEND specific groups
- Some hubs feel too busy or too quiet
- Limited activities for older children

Ways to improve

- Better advertising and clearer information
- More themed activities (sensory play, music, baby massage and forest school)
- SEND only sessions and more sensory spaces
- More weekend and evening sessions
- A cafe or social area
- Consistent session timetables

Views captured through consultation with families by North Tyneside Council's Participation and Engagement Team. Families will continue to help us shape this plan and their voice will keep guiding our decisions.



What we know about local need

Using our population needs assessment and local data, we know:



Some areas of the borough have much higher levels of disadvantage

Children's early language and communication need extra focus

Outcomes vary across neighbourhoods, some children are less ready for school than others

Families of children with SEND need more consistent, earlier support

Family Hub attendance is high in some areas but low in others

Many families don't yet know what's available to them locally

These findings will help us target resources and improve support where it is needed most

Our vision



Universal Offer

- Antenatal support – one-to-one and groups
- Birth declarations
- Baby Massage
- Stay and Play, Healthy Babies and Rhyme time
- The Healthy Child Programme
- Wider community offer through VCS including togetherness facilitated groups
- Digital support online – including Togetherness online and Healthy Relationships

Early Support

- Chatterbox
- Togetherness Offer
- Everyday parenting support
- One-to-one Workshops
- Sleep Well

Specialist Interventions

- Language and Communication
- Early Years Partnership offer
- Targeted Interventions
- Offer in schools, home and community settings

Priorities and actions



- Building on what currently works, develop the intervention model for ante natal to school aged children, with a specific focus on universal, early and targeted support
- To train a cohort of staff from a variety of agencies to deliver early support and targeted interventions
- Develop a comprehensive training offer for staff across all settings and agencies which will specifically include language and communication training
- Following recent consultations, establish which schools will offer supported facilitation and delivery. To include schools where they are below their contextual GLD and those where there is a disproportionate gap between children who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not
- To develop a delivery model for other settings to roll out where appropriate
- Develop a professional peer support and mentoring model to our two-year-old providers
- Specifically focusing on some of our more vulnerable families, where we have identified there are gaps in provision
- Build on our digital offer to enable parents and carers to have easy access to online help and support, all on one platform
- To ensure North Tyneside continues to have a high quality childcare offer that is sufficient and sustainable. To meet the needs of parents and carers and to ensure that all children get the best start in life and are ready for school

Our Governance structure



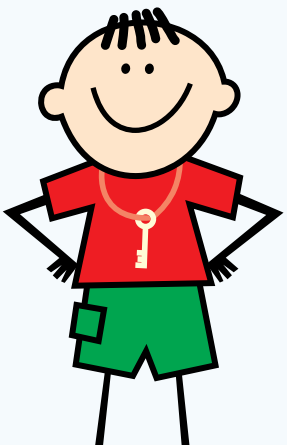
North Tyneside Strategic Partnership

CYPL Partnership

NTSCP Executive Board Chair - AD

Best Start in Life Board
Chair: HoS Safeguarding and Children's Services

- Operational Model North Tyneside Early Communication Network (HLE/EBI leads)
- Workforce Development
- Digital Offer and Communications
- Partner and Family Engagement
- Data and Performance
- Childcare Working Group



We will be continually developing our plan based on what our families tell us and changing need

