

SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING: CYP Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 7th January 2026

SUBJECT: Family Hubs and Better Start

REPORT FROM: Ben Dunne

CONTACT OFFICER: Collette Radcliffe

1.0 BACKGROUND

A Family Hub is a system-wide model of providing high-quality, joined- up, whole-family support services. Family Hubs deliver these services to families from conception, through a child's early years until they reach the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities). Family Hub model provides a universal 'front door' to families, offering a 'one-stop shop' of family support services across their social care, education, mental health and physical health needs, with a comprehensive Start for Life offer for parents and babies at its core. This is the universal offer for all families in the first 1001 days which brings together critical services for every new family.

2.0 ISSUES

2.1 Funding

Family Hub funding to be received by Bury from April 2026 totals **£2,161,100** across the 3 years.

Strand	% ¹	2026-27 Allocation ²	2027-28 Allocation	2028-29 Allocation
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - programme	47%	£385,900	£315,600	£324,000
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - capital	11%	£77,200	£78,700	£80,200
Parenting support	17%	£122,700	£124,300	£129,700
Home learning environment support	24%	£170,300	£172,400	£180,000
Total		£756,100	£691,000	£714,000

- Bury was not in receipt of the Family Hubs monies released to Local Authorities approximately 3 years ago.
- Bury has been awarded £137K to bridge this deficit as we did not receive T1 or T2 family hub monies. This is set aside from the financials listed in the table above.
- From April 2026 Bury LA will be awarded funding across 4 strands. Stands 3 and 4 are primarily for 3 and 4 years old's and recognises the symbiotic link between early years

educational establishments and the Home Learning Environment. This funding totals £2,161,100 across the 3 years.

- Programme Guidance is expected to be received in December; we are also awaiting Annex M which will set out the EB programmes that can be used.
- Those Local Authorities that received existing Family Hub funding are now going to receive an additional strand of investment named Best Start in Life Family Hubs and Healthy Babies 0-5 years. This isn't a strand we are receiving, GMCA are challenging this on behalf of Local Authorities who are not going to receive this strand due to the inequalities this will create compounding those already created previously.
- All Local Authorities have been set an ambitious 3 year target to improve the Good Level of Development which is the measure for School Readiness and a statutory assessment completed at the end of reception.
Our targets are set to be achieved by 2028 they are:
 - 74% of children achieving GLD this is an increase of 9 percentage points.
 - 57.7% of children in receipt of FSM achieving GLD, this is an increase of 6.2 percentage points.

Family Hub activity is pivotal to supporting the achievement of these ambitious targets through the services delivered by supporting children and families pre-birth to the age of 5 years and giving them the Best Start in Life. This can only be achieved by services, partners and voluntary organisations working closely together.

2.2 Estates and Delivery Space

The following spaces are used for the delivery of multi-agency services:

- Radcliffe Hub/Coronation Road Children's Centre
- Bury West and North Children's Centre
- East Bury Family Hub
- Chesham Fold Family Hub, Hoyle Nursery School Forest garden
- Whitefield Children's Centre
- Prestwich Hub, Prestwich Library, The Wow centre, Spark Life in Stella House and St Mary's Park
- Additionally, we offer drop-in sessions and visit pre - existing organisations for families with children 0-5 years within Church Halls, The FED, ADAB, Bury Active Women's Centre.
- Weekly sessions are also delivered within our Parks across the borough

Childrens Centres, Family Hubs and other venues are used for delivery purposes, however the Local Authority buildings are aging and small in size which means there are always difficulties in delivering the full spectrum of Family Hub activity.

2.3 Future plans

- Radcliffe Hub development- time scales July 2026 this will offer a delivery space, clinical and office space for staff to work. The Bridge Street building – We are exploring use of this building to become our designated Family Hub – This building is currently being used by the Vinci contractors as a base and will not become available until July 2026. Our current building on Coronation Road – We would like to keep this building as

a spoke from the main hub to allow us to reach out into the local community around the building and further develop the relationships and work we have already commenced.

- Chesham Fold Family Hub – time scale early 2026 – Unique opportunity to deliver services within one of the most deprived areas in Bury. (awaiting roof repairs from Housing) Chesham fold community centre, we conducted a visit to the site earlier this week, work now needs to undertake to assess the feasibility of using this building as it is in a poor state of repair.
- Whitefield working as a campus model across Whitefield Family Hub and the Ark Live Well Centre – time scales for the Ark work should commence shortly, opening to deliver services in the new year.
- Prestwich Hub – The building will be Community Asset transferred to the Jewel Foundation with an MOU in place which describes service delivery and expectation of using the space jointly going forward.
- Bury West and North Hub – This building has been refurbished and is our Early Years centre, supporting families from Bury West and the North of the borough. Consideration needs to be given as to if an additional space in the north (Ramsbottom) would support this large geographical location which would then allow for a hub and spoke model.
- Bury East Family Hub – This building was remodelled in 2024 and is serving as Bury's first Family Hub, however due to the geographical size and landscape of Bury East it has been discussed that the Family Hub should be relocated to the New Kershaw centre (due to the deprivation levels North of Rochdale Road) once this becomes vacant in 2027. Redevelopment of the site will be required to ensure the building is fit for purpose going forward. The East Bury building can then be lease out or disposed of. To note the roof of the East building needs to be replaced as outlined in a recent roof survey, the costings of this stands at £250K.

2.4 Plans for Spend:

- Strengthening parents to be the most enduring and consistent educator in their child's life. Substantial additional capacity will be needed across both strands including extending existing temporary contracts of our Early Years Workers who currently delivery 70% of the Family Hub expectations.
- Universal - Evidenced Based Home-Learning Programme to be delivered across neighbourhoods utilising Early Years Educational Establishments and Home-Learning Environments. This would require 2 additional staff members to allow capacity and support delivery.
- Specialist – Increase Portage capacity and accessibility to families to meet the specific needs of Bury's most vulnerable children and their families.

This will require additional thought and planning as the guidance becomes clearer through the multi-agency Family Hub Delivery Board.

Group Work – Bury have purchased the Liquid logic group work module which will enable us to record sessions attendance and family hub activity, this will link directly to EHM and LCS enabling joined up working and sharing of information across internal services. Staff have all now accessed the training sessions to use the system. The system is now ready and live. staff are now concentrating on registering families and creating sessions within the system, which is a huge task. From January we will begin the formal process of

attaching the registered families to the sessions they have attended. From April 2026 We will be able to look back over Q4 Jan-March and report on attendances and registrations at all sites and sessions enabling us to monitor and track attendance at our Family Hub sessions and services going forward. So far, we have registered 295 families this continues to grow weekly.

Attendance:

We are currently completing a manual count of attendance at Childrens Centre and Family Hub sessions for our 0-5 offer.

Last year from April 2024 April 2025 **26,427** children and families attended of Childrens Centre and Family Hub activities.

Q1: April- June 2025 - 8,292 children and families

Q2 July -September 2025 – 7309 children and their families

Total for this year so far: 15,301 families and children

We do not currently record attendance at midwifery or HV appointments, however this will be captured on group work going forward.

Chesham Fold - The contractors have now handed the building back to us and we have commenced work to internally prepare the building for use. This includes moving all furniture and equipment from our storage space. Unfortunately, during the building handover the contractors brought to our attention that the roof over the single story extension and garage do not have any felt on them as this has perished meaning that the slate tiles are resting on the rafters causing the roofs to leak. We are currently in discussion with housing as part of the responsibility lies with them to rectify these issues. The garage roof is our responsibility, and quotes are being sourced, however the roof is shared with the property next door which we are not responsible for, and the work will probably require a full new roof to make it safe and secure. Whilst the roofs are replaced we may have to close the site for a short period of time as the work will require scaffolding.

Further to this we have just had our Fire Risk assessment complete by an external company as required by Law prior to opening. This has identified a number of issues that need to be addressed before we can open, including replacing some of the internal doors as they are not compliant with fire regulations. We are awaiting the full report so we can address the issues raised.

Bury staff Wi-Fi has now been installed in the building, which means staff can work from the building whilst deliveries, work and contractors visit the site.

The CCTV, Fire alarm and burglar alarm are now all working order.

The Family Hub sign has now been installed.

We will be increasing community presence in the lead up to opening, liaising with the community and gathering feedback.

We have now completed 4 separate consultation events in the local community, the last was delivered over two days with representation from the Early Years team, Early help team, educational psychologist, youth justice and a member of staff from the youth team. We have also given families the opportunity to completed virtual feedback via a google form in total we have consulted with 52 local families.

Feedback shows the need for the following:

- Baby sessions
- Speech and language support
- Safe space for children of all ages
- 0-5 sessions
- Morning sessions for babies
- Afternoons for all other ages
- Youth club
- School holiday sessions
- Arts craft, dancing, boxing
- SEND sessions
- Advice and support and school children
- Careers advice
- Parent classes
- Esol
- Support for dads
- Mental health
- Healthy eating
- Transition support
- Safety in the community
- Messy play sessions

The building has a new email address assigned to it cheshamfold.fh@bury.gov.uk which is now being shared with partners. The telephone number is 0161 253 7300 (this will be live shortly)

A family hub opening day will take place once it is safe to open and we would welcome partnership involvement in this e.g. a community day.

Building usage - Already agreed:

- Monthly Citizens Advice drop session
- Revenues and benefits weekly drop in session
- Monthly Speech and language drop-in session – by SALT
- Weekly community walm space (cold food) delivered by Housing whilst the Community centre is closed
- Healthy Start Vitamin distribution
- Clothing donation rail
- Essential parent iPad
- Weekly 0-5 core offer sessions including, 0-5 stay and play, Little Cruisers, baby stay and play, 5 week course of baby sensations
- Little Talker 5 week course to support SLC for children aged 18 months to 3 years
- Building Blocks to Words 5 week course to support SLC for children aged 0-18 months
- We will also continue to deliver a weekly forest stay and play session at Hoyle Nursery
- Support and information on childcare costs and finding childcare places
- Volunteering opportunities
- Weekly parent/carer drop in session

Currently the borough are in discussion with Youth, Midwifery and Adult learning about use of space.

Timetable:

A specific timetable of delivery has been drafted in anticipation of opening and will be available shortly.

2.5 Governance

The Family Hub Delivery Board – The board has met 7 times with the next meeting taking place in January 2026. There is good attendance from board members with 14 members attending regularly. The board monitors an action plan, and a risk register to enable continuous improvements. It was discussed at the last board that there should be an operational group established that will report progress and issues directly to the board. This group will be chaired by Collette. The board representation needs to include IT and Data and performance teams.

We also have the Starting Well and Early Help Partnership Board (SWEHP) jointly chaired by the director of Public Health Jon Hobday and The Early Years Service manager Collette Radcliffe. Discussions are underway to merge The Family Hub Delivery Board and the SWEHP Board, this board would then become the strategic governance and align our Family Hub, public health and Early Years and Family help priorities. This board would meet bimonthly and be chaired by Ben Dunne, the Director of Early Years, Education and Skills and the vice chair would be Jon Hobday, the Director of Public Health.

The newly developed GLD subgroup will report directly into this board. This multi-agency group is chaired by Collette Radcliffe and is currently meeting every two weeks. The group has developed a 5-year strategic action plan, and a member of the public health team is helping to project manage this piece of work.

This work will also be governed by the DfE with our first progress meeting taking place at some point in January 2026.

It was also agreed that each Childrens Centre and Family Hub will each have a partnership Group that includes parental representation. This group will design and increase the offer and make decisions about service delivery. A decision needs to be made about who will chair and organise the meetings going forward.

Discussions and consultations with parents' carers and service users are ongoing in each neighborhood as we deliver sessions and services. The voice of the community and service users are helping to shape the delivery model and are being shared with our parent's forum.

Parents forum- We have delivered 3 parents forums this year with attendance from parents and carers across the borough the average attendance is 7.

From these session parents and carers have influenced how we promote and deliver our services.

They have asked us to (you said we did):

- Create individual timetable for each centre in a paper format
- A session for dads and male carers
- Asked for school readiness sessions to continue in the summer
- To establish a pram push session

- Advised on social media posts
- Whitefield outdoor garden

Social Media-

4.9k Followers on Facebook which continues to grow daily.

394 followers on Instagram

Beebot –

The contract between ourselves and Beebot has now been finalised, we are now moving to the platform development phase. We are now in the process of establishing 3 working groups to develop the first 3 strands of content, of which one is Family Hubs. Membership in this working group will come from the Early Years team, Family Hub staff also from our Family Hub delivery Board.

Timetable -

Padlet-

<https://padlet.com/BuryEarlyYears/bury-universal-universal-plus-family-offer-0-5-years-ea7fsql0nk8ynfjb>

We have had 20k visits to the padlet since commencing use, to promote and share our sessions and services for children and their families aged 0-5

Parenting

Below are the Universal and universal plus parenting programmes for families with children aged 0-5 now being delivered through our Childrens Centre's and Family Hubs by our Early Years Development team.

Universal:

- **Communication Stay and Play** – a weekly session (coming soon) 12months -3 years parents who want to support their child communication
- **Little Adventures**- A weekly drop-in session for children aged 18 months – 5 years. Supports children's physical development.
- **Ready, Steady, grow** – A weekly session for children aged 0-5 years- supporting physical development through play.

Universal plus:

- **Building blocks to words** – A 5-week course for babies 0-18 months to support babies' communication skills
- **Little Talkers** – A 5-week course – for children aged 18 months- 3 years for children with a mild communication delay
- **Tiny Treasures**- A 5-week course – for children aged 1-2 years, aimed to support parents who want to understand how they can support their child's development and learning through play.

During Quarter two 826 children and parents attended our Early Years development sessions and course.

We are now delivering the following targeted parenting programmes:

- Riding the Rapids
- Tripple P parenting programme
- Tripple P Early Years and Primary
- Tripple P teen

- Stronger relationships and healthy parenting
- Solihul parenting programme
- Who's in Charge

Information on courses delivered and attendance has been included in Family Helps portfolio report.

Session delivery- The EY universal core offer in Prestwich is now being fully delivered this is being delivered from multiple different venues including the FED, Spark life (Stella House), WOW centre, Park, Library and Prestwich hub.

This means we are now fully meeting the 70% delivery requirement for Early Years – Activities for Children aged 0-5 years.

Session development- We are listening to family's needs and adjusting and growing our delivery based on the feedback we receive for example families asked for a session for Dad's and male carers we delivered on this ask by establishing Weekend warriors, this session has gone from strength to strength, is well attended and recently feature in a comms report. The session has also been shortlisted for a 'Let's Do it award'. Our plans are to deliver a further monthly session building on the success of what we are already delivering in the south of the borough.

Essential parent- The essential parent app has now been launched, as part of the launch each children's centre has been provided within an iPad and stand to be placed in their reception areas which will enable families to access information and guidance available on the app these are now ready to be installed. There has been some issues with the IT but hopefully these are being addressed.

Wi-Fi connectivity- ICT have now rolled out the new Wi-Fi connectivity at Bury West and North and also to Radcliffe CC which has enabled the Midwives to access their digital records and remain on site and extend their clinics (this is the first outreach outside of 3 and 6 KP). Our plans are for the Wi-Fi to be extended to East and Whitefield. IT are currently liaising with the staff at East.

Birth Registrars – It is proposed that the registrars will work from Prestwich 1 day per week.

Digital plat form Beebot- Development of the digital platform has continued with sign off from SLT to move to full concept. Family Hubs is one of the three key areas for initial development with a working group being established to mobilise this, partners from the Family Hub delivery board have been asked to support and attend the working group. We continue visit local community venues and groups to offer support and guidance in the community on numerous topics including ICON, take up of funding entitlements and weaning etc, staff will also refer to specialist services when needed in the hope that this will reduce the demand for statutory services.

We currently visit the following venues:

- FED
- Bury Active Women's Bury
- ADAB
- Heaton Park Methodist
- Bolton Road Methodist
- Mosses centre

- We have also supported the care leavers by delivering a stay and play session for the last 12 months.

We also support families (linking into the poverty agenda) with:

- Healthy Start Vitamin distribution
- Clothing donation rail
- Oral hygiene
- Food parcels
- Breastfeeding
- Story sacks
- Support with Childcare – finding a place, costs and funding
- Speech and language support, -WellComm screenings
- Weekly parent/carer drop in session
- Volunteering opportunities
- School and college placements

3.0 CONCLUSION

The Family Hub programme in Bury is progressing at pace, with clear evidence of growing community engagement, strengthened multi-agency collaboration, and a developing infrastructure that will enable more coherent, high-quality support for families from pre-birth to age five and beyond. While challenges remain—notably around estates, capacity, and meeting ambitious GLD targets—the work to date demonstrates strong foundations, responsive service design shaped by local need, and a clear governance framework to drive continued improvement. Continued investment, partnership commitment and robust oversight will be essential to ensuring the Family Hub model delivers its full potential in improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for children and families across the borough.

List of Background Papers:- n/a

Contact Details:

Ben Dunne (Director of Early Years, Education and Skills)
b.dunne@bury.gov.uk

Executive Director sign off Date:_____

JET Meeting Date:_____