

Croydon Best Start Family Hubs Practitioner's Toolkit



Helping families get the right support, in the right
place, at the right time

Summer 2026



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Welcome!

Welcome to the Croydon Best Start in Life Family Hubs Practitioners' Guide. This guide is designed to support everyone working in or alongside Family Hubs in Croydon, local authority staff, health professionals, education providers, voluntary and community organisations, and children's centres.

Whether you're new to Family Hubs or already involved, this guide will help you:

- Understand what Family Hubs are and their purpose
- Know what support is available to families
- Learn how to signpost or refer families to services
- Connect with key contacts and tools



Our vision

"Connecting families and young people with access to help, when and where they need it."

Croydon Family Hubs bring services together to support children, young people (aged 0 to 19 or up to 25 with SEND), and their families. Our approach is centred on:

- Making it easier to get help early
- Improving access to services
- Coordinated approach, reducing duplication
- Delivering better outcomes for children and families

Family Hubs reflect Croydon's wider ambition to give every child the best start in life.



What are Family Hubs?

Family Hubs are part of a national programme transforming how families receive support. Rather than being a single building, a Family Hub is a network of services working together to meet a wide range of family needs.

As part of the Family Hubs Programme, the Best Start in Life Offer focuses on 0 to 5 services.

Support includes parenting, education, mental health, employment, and more — delivered in a way that's easy to access and navigate.



Funded services

The Family Hubs and Best Start in Life programme is jointly managed by the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social Care. It seeks to join-up and enhance services for families with children of all ages through a network of family hubs, with Best Start in Life services for families with 0 to 5 year-olds at their core.

Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies include:

- Parenting support for families
- Parent-infant relationship and perinatal mental health support
- Early language and the home learning environment (HLE)
- Infant feeding support
- Parent and carer panels



Best Start in Life Plan

The the Best Start in Life plan in Croydon uses DfE-funded Parenting and Home Learning Environment evidence-based interventions at scale, anchored in 12 Best Start Family Hubs, to reach a Good Level of Development (GLD) of 78.3% and 66.6% for children eligible for FSM by 2027/2028 academic year. The plan is built around a theory of change developed collaboratively by working with internal and external colleagues, including early years practitioners, managers and leaders from across Croydon's early years system. On current trend, Croydon would not reach 78.3% GLD until 2032. Closing the 356 gap is designed to accelerate this trajectory through Evidenced-Based Interventions (EBIs) at scale plus system-level changes across three shifts



Best Start in Life Plan

The three shifts are:

Shift 1: Empowered parents and the home learning environment. Parents and carers have the knowledge, confidence and ability to create a home learning environment that supports their child's development, and they act on it. Primarily targets: communication and language, Personal, Social, and Emotional Development (PSED), early literacy, and self-regulation.

Shift 2: Early identification and targeting. Interventions reach the children who need them early enough to make a difference, and no child is missed. Primarily targets: communication and language, SEND identification, and PSED.

Shift 3: Consistent practice across early years settings. Early years settings and practitioners consistently support the GLD mission, weaving it through everything they do. Primarily targets: all GLD domains, with focus on language-rich environments and transition consistency.

This plan focuses on what we can achieve within the timeframe, resources available, while continuing to deliver core services and how we aim to do it well. It supports other key Croydon strategies including Helping Families Thrive, the Early Help Strategy, the Early Years Strategy and the SEND and AP Strategy and aligns with the Families First Partnership currently in development.

Our Best Start Family Hubs programme is linked to the work that is taking place across London through the Opportunity Mission coordinated by the Greater London Authority and London Councils. This will enable us to ensure that there will be more consistency in the offer available to families and children across London



Croydon's Family Hubs



Croydon is proud to be a leading authority in delivering this model. Our current network includes:

- **Woodlands Family Hub (Selsdon)** – Serving the south of the borough
- **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Family Hub (South Norwood)** – Serving the north of the borough
- **Planned Central Croydon Hub** – Under development, shaped by community consultation

In addition to these hubs, families can also access support through:

- Outreach services and mobile teams
- Information hubs in schools, GP surgeries, and libraries
- A developing digital hub for accessible online support

This integrated approach reduces confusion, duplication, and delays in getting help.

Family Hubs locality map



■ North Locality
■ Central Locality
■ South Locality

● Libraries

1. Ashburton Library
2. Central Library
3. Coulsdon Library
4. New Addington Library
5. Norbury Library
6. Purley Library
7. Selsdon Library
8. South Norwood Library
9. Thornton Heath Library

● Children's Centres

10. Aerodrome Children's Centre
11. Byron Children's Centre
12. Castle Hill Children's Centre
13. Fairchildes Children's Centre

14. Kensington Avenue Children's Centre
15. Purley Oaks Children's Centre
16. Selhurst Children's Centre
17. Shirley Children's Centre
18. Winterbourne Children's Centre

● Family Hubs

19. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Family Hub
20. Woodlands Family Hub



Who we support

Family Hubs provide support for:

- All children and young people aged 0 to 19
- Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) up to age 25
- Parents, carers, and wider family members needing help

We work closely with our partners across early years, health, education, children's social care, and voluntary and charity sectors to make sure families get the support they need.



What are the 24 Family Hub services?

Family Hubs consists of a variety of services all working together. The Family Hubs aim to deliver 24 services (as listed on the infographic).

These services can be face-to-face, online or via outreach sites.



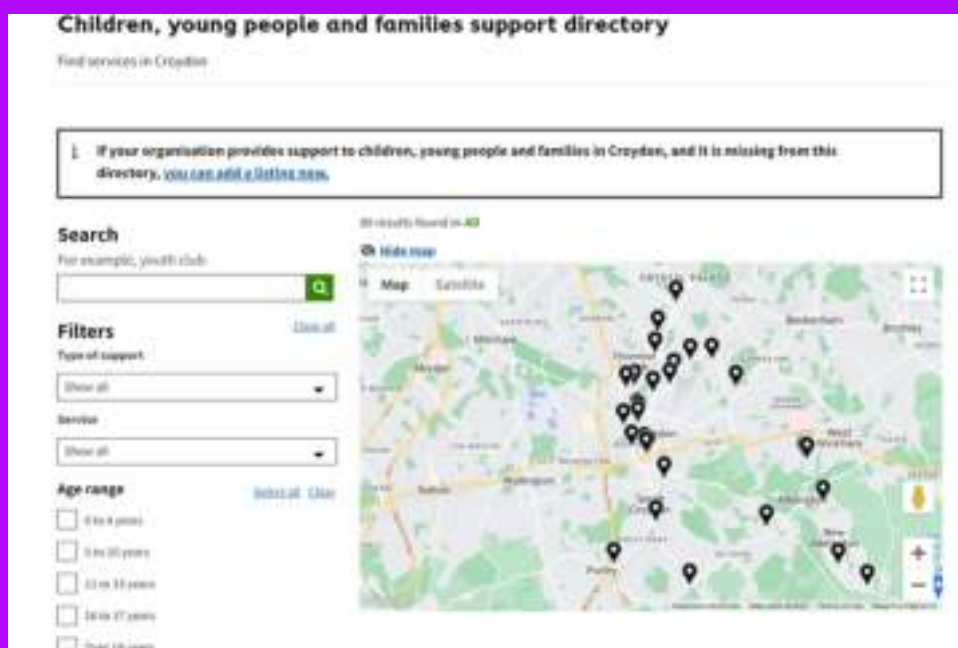
Directory of services for families, children and young people

This directory is for families and professionals. The services may include support around:

- community and voluntary groups
- crime and youth justice
- domestic violence and abuse
- employment, education and training
- health and wellbeing
- housing and homelessness
- parenting and childcare
- social, community and leisure activities
- special educational needs and disabilities



[Children, young people and families support directory | Croydon Council](#)



How to access services

Services can be accessed through:

- Drop-in – At Family Hub locations - families can turn up or book an activity
- Self-referral – Direct contact
- Professional referral - Signposting to the hubs and an internal service request

Family Hubs staff will:

- Provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all
- Assess the right level of support: signposting, referral, or multi-agency involvement
- Offer a confidential and safe space to talk

If you want to find out more information, you can contact one of the family hub team to discuss via familyhubs@croydon.gov.uk.



Drop-ins and specialist support

One-to-one appointments with Navigators are available to support families across the borough – Book via 020 8916 0543 & 020 8684 3777 option 1 or email familyhubs@croydon.gov.uk.

Partner drop-ins and bookable appointments at Family Hubs:

- Citizens Advice
- South West London Law Centre
- Department for Work and Pensions support
- Job Club
- Perinatal Link Worker
- School Attendance
- Infant Feeding and Well Baby Clinics (baby weighing).
- Benefits Advice
- Income Officer



Additional services

1. [Health Visiting Clinics](#)



2. [Breathe Melodies for mums](#)



3. [Expectant Fathers Service - Future Men](#)



4. [Musical Bumps](#)



5. [Talking Therapies Wellbeing Workshop](#)



6. [HomeStart Perinatal Peer Support](#)



7. [BabyZone & Happy Baby Community Outreach](#)



8. [Barnardo's Virtual Hub](#)



9. [Triple P Baby online](#)



10. [Maternity Mates](#)



11. [Baby Box](#)



12. [Family Transitions Triple P Online](#)



Links coming Soon: Breastpump Loan Scheme; Additional parenting educational midwife; Infant feeding friendly spaces; Infant feeding night workers; Women's wellbeing workshop; Baby Box; Our Family Wizard; Peer Supporters

Family Hub Navigators

The Navigators offer one-to-one appointments for families at Woodlands & Samuel Coleridge Taylor Family Hubs. Their role includes:

- Promoting the Best Start in Life offer broadly across the borough for example to GP practices, nurseries and the community
- Engaging with partners and families at various venues i.e. Babyzone, children's centre's, toddler groups, nurseries, youth clubs/activities and schools etc. to promote Family Hubs.
- Delivering family activities at the Family Hub in the school holidays
- Attending local community groups – networking with voluntary sector organisations
- Building relationships and maintaining communications with users of the Family Hubs via newsletters, emails and telephone

Contact

Samantha, Kirsty, Reha, Kirsti and Julie on 0208 916 0543 & 0208 684 3777 option 1 or email familyhubs@croydon.gov.uk



Tools and resources

Free tools and services for parents include:

Digital tools - Apps and digital channels

1. [Easy Peasy Croydon](#)
(for 0-5 years).



2. [Anya Health app](#)



3. [DadPad app](#)



Training and development

Introduction to CSCP Family Hubs Event Booking platform (PHEW)

Family Hubs offer practitioner training via the Croydon Safeguarding and Children's Partnerships' PHEW training platform. These are an example of recent session we have delivered. This will be updated regularly, please see link to keep up to date - [Event List: All Croydon Family Hubs](#)



- Take part in Lunch and Learn networking sessions every six weeks at the Family Hubs
- Family Hub Partnership Learning Programme - a skills-based training designed especially for our Family Hub workforce (this includes all professionals across the partnership)
- PEEP Learning Together - parent and practitioner training.
- For Baby's Sake - Whole family approach for babies, children and Young People exposed to domestic abuse (various online workshops)
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- CPD Trauma Attachment and Brain Development - online modules
- Think Family and Perinatal Mental Health



Safeguarding

Safeguarding Statement

Croydon Family Hubs safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people accessing our services. It aligns with the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) and national statutory guidance to ensure a consistent, proactive, and community-informed approach to child protection and safeguarding.

[!\[\]\(b6fe3d974b20682aca79f7e6638f28cd_img.jpg\) Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Croydon Family Hubs are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We believe that:

- The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All children, young people, and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect and to grow up in safe and supportive environments.
- All staff, volunteers, and partners have a duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families using our services.



Parent Carer Panels

We need the help of local parents & carers who use our children's services currently, or may in the future, to make sure that Family Hubs are designed to meet the needs of our local community.

One of the ways we do this is by holding Parent Carer Panels and forums. This is an opportunity for parents and carers to work together with local services and commissioners to help co-produce and design services for children. This helps make sure families are being listened to and heard in Croydon.

The purpose of the Parent Carer Panel is to:

- Make sure local parents and carers play a key role in designing and continuously improving family services
- Enable the voice of local parents & carers including those whose voices are seldom heard
- Ensure Family Hubs are designed for inclusion and meet the needs of the diverse communities that live in Croydon.

We want panels to be representative of a range of parents and carers from Croydon's diverse communities. We welcome families from all walks of life and backgrounds with a particular focus on those who are pregnant/partner of an expectant parent and with children up to age 5.



Stay connected

To stay informed:

- Join the Family Hubs mailing list
- Attend monthly Family Hub open days for professionals
- Service and team managers should join North, Central, or South delivery groups to collaborate locally
- Encourage parents to join the Parent Carer Panel (meets every eight weeks)

Email: familyhubs@croydon.gov.uk to get involved.



Quick Links

Croydon's Family Hubs only work through partnership and collaboration. No one service can meet all needs, but together, we can make a real difference.

Thank you for being part of the Family Hubs journey.

[Croydon Family Hubs main page](#)



[YouTube video: Start for Life - Playtime builds bonds](#)



[Children and families directory](#)



[Fathers Conference video](#)



[Family Hubs Instagram Linktree](#)



[Start for Life](#)



Guidance

The practitioners toolkit is available on our website page and will be updated regularly.

You can also find out more about Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies guidance here:

[Best Start Family Hubs & Healthy Babies - Guidance for Local Authorities](#)



[Best Start Family Hubs & Healthy Babies - Wider Service Expectations](#)



[Croydon's Best Start in Life Strategic Plan 2026-2031](#)



AREAS OF INTEREST

1. [Croydon's Best Start in Life Strategic Plan 2026-2031](#)



2. [Safe, Healthy and Happy: Parental Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy for Croydon 2025-2029](#)



3. [Best Start in Life.gov](#)



4. [The Families First Partnership \(FFP\) Programme Guide](#)



5. [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)



6. [National Centre for Family Hubs](#)



8. [Multi-agency safeguarding in Family Hubs](#)



Where to find our Family Hubs:

Woodlands

Site of Quest Primary School, Farnborough Avenue, South Croydon, CR2 8HD

Telephone: 020 8916 0543

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

194 Selhurst Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 6XX



Download the digital version of the practitioners toolkit

