

Report for: Cabinet Member Signing: 5 March 2026

Title: Approve acceptance of Family Hubs and Start for Life grant funding and award of contracts to various organisations necessary to deliver the Family Hub programme as set out in the delivery plan.

Report authorised by: Ann Graham, Director: Children's Services

Lead Officer: Caroline Brian, Assistant Director for Children and Young People Commissioning and Programmes

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. The Family Hubs Programme is part of a national funded initiative, jointly managed by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), has been rebranded as Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies, effective 1 April 2026. This report therefore refers to the programme using its new name. It has been confirmed that Haringey will receive the continuation of grant funding for the next three (3) years totalling £4,692,300, with approx. £1.5m being allocated to 2026-2027. Based on discussions with DfE colleagues, the Early Help service shall continue their focus on embedding the current delivery model and measuring impact.
- 1.2. This report seeks approval to accept grant funding from the Department of Education (DfE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for the continuation of the Family Hubs Programme in Haringey of £4,692,300 in accordance with Contract Standing Orders (CSO) 21.01 (Approval for Receipt of Grants from External Bodies).

Furthermore, to successfully continue delivering essential services to support in delivering Haringey's approach to a family hub model, this report seeks approval to award contracts to the three (3) organisations necessary to deliver the Best Start Family Hub programme as set out in the delivery plan.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1. Not applicable

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. For the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families to:

- 3.1.1. in accordance with CSO 21.01 to grant permission to accept £4,692,300 external funding from Department of Education (DfE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) over the next three years, to continue the Family Hubs Programme;
- 3.1.2. Approve the award of contract to Whittington Health NHS Trust for the provision of Parent Infant Psychology Service, for a period of 2 year from 1st May 2026 to 30th April 2028 at a total maximum cost of £550,620 under the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 (“PSR”) Direct Award Process C and
- 3.1.3. Approve the waiver of Contract Standing Order (CSO) 12.02 (requirement to obtain three competitive quotations) as permitted under CSO 18.01.2(d) (iii) (where the value of the contract is below the applicable threshold pursuant to the Procurement Act 2023 and it is in the Council’s overall interest to waive the requirement); and award contracts to:
- Baby’s Sake, for the provision of therapeutic interventions supporting parents and babies, at a cost of £105,000 for a period of 3 years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029; and
 - Wards Corner, for the delivery of Latin American Stay and Play sessions, at a cost of £27,595 for a period of 3 year, from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1. The Best Start Family Hubs programme’s core aim is to improve family services including Healthy Babies services, particularly in areas with the highest levels of deprivation and disproportionately poor health and educational outcomes. Accepting this external funding will enable the Council to continue with our commitment to successfully deliver the Best Start Family Hubs Programme over the next 3 years. This Programme is needs led, responds to resident demand and provides multi agency services that are accessible locally.
- 4.2. To ensure compliance with the grant conditions and the uninterrupted provision of services to families and Family Hub staff, it is recommended that the Council award contracts to the three organisations recommended in 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 above. Given the time constraints and resource availability, this course of action is deemed to be in the best interest of the Council.
- 4.3. The need to establish and initiate service delivery is driven by the requirements to allocate and expend the DfE grant funding within the timescales outlined in the submitted Best Start Family Hubs Delivery Plan.

5. Alternative options considered.

- 5.1. **Do nothing (Grant funding):** The Council could decide not to accept the grant. As such the Council will lose the opportunity to continue the delivery of the Family Hubs Programme which is a key objective within our

partnership strategies: Haringey Early Help Strategy and Haringey Early Years Strategy. Therefore, this option was not considered viable.

- 5.2. **Option 1: Do nothing** - The Council will not meet the requirement of the grant conditions for the Best Start Family Hubs Programme if it does not provide perinatal mental health, support for domestic abuse and parenting support offers which would result in clawback of funding and non-delivery of services to local families.
- 5.3. **Option 2: Competitive quotation process** – Going to tender would not be a viable option due to limited time available as well as not being able to attract good market due to limited period of funding as well as the need for specialist clinical requirements, therapeutic interventions and Latin American Stay and Play, which would be a challenge to meet requirements. Such a delay would lead to impactful present gaps in service preventing vulnerable families having access to this highly critical service.
- 5.4. **Option 3: Most Suitable Provider Process (PIPS)** - This is not a competitive process but allows the relevant authority to make a judgement on which provider is most suitable, based on consideration of the key criteria. Despite the limitations of the small, local market, the potential risk of challenge means that although permitted under the PSR regulations, this option is not recommended.

6. Background information

- 6.1. Local authorities participating in the Best Start Family Hubs Programme are expected to deliver against the following components in their delivery model, with funding attached to each of these elements:
- Create a network of welcoming Best Start Family Hubs that are for children and young people aged 0 – 19 physically, virtually and via outreach.
 - Publish a best start in life offer
 - Evidenced based parenting programmes
 - Infant-parent mental health support
 - Breast feeding support
 - Accessible information, confident and competent multi agency workforce, data, evaluation and evidence of impact and robust leadership
- 6.2. It has been confirmed that Haringey will receive continuation of funding over the next 3 years, with approx. £1.5m being allocated to 2026-2027. The funding allows the opportunity to consolidate, embed and enhance Family Hub network and Healthy Babies services offer. This means continuing to deliver the minimum expectations.
- 6.3. Parent Infant Psychology Service (PIPS)
- 6.3.1. The Parent Infant Psychology Service (PIPS) offer is a key component in the support to families and staff within the Best Start Family Hubs. This service

includes direct one-on-one work with families and their infants, as well as delivering the group sessions and training for Family Hub staff to enhance their awareness and understanding of positive parent-infant relationships.

6.3.2. PIPS falls under the scope of the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 (“PSR”) which came into force on 1 January 2024. Under these regulations, when procuring healthcare services, relevant authorities must follow the procurement principles and apply the processes set out within.

6.3.3. The Council selected Direct Award Process C, which can be used where the incumbent provider is satisfactorily delivering its current contract and the new contract does not represent a material change from the existing arrangements.

6.3.4. To support this decision, the Council carried out a Provider Assessment using the following criteria:

A. Basic Criteria

- Suitability to deliver the specific activities required under the contract
- Economic and financial standing
- Technical and professional capability

B. Key Criteria

- Quality and innovation
- Value
- Integration, collaboration and service sustainability
- Improving access, reducing health inequalities and facilitating patient choice
- Social value

6.3.5. Following the assessment, the Council is satisfied that the provider (Whittington Health NHS Trust) has delivered high quality services in the last three years and their proposal for the new contract demonstrates that they are more than likely to meet the requirements of the proposed contract

6.3.6. As the current provider, Whittington Health NHS Trust, is able to mobilise swiftly to deliver the contractual requirements.

6.3.7. The service provides value for money as an extended, upscaled offer from the existing offer, linked into local referral pathways to ensure targeted reach for the benefit of the target cohort of parents and infants in need of this service. Whittington Health NHS Trust is strongly positioned to deliver the required service, utilising their existing core structures, referral pathways and management frameworks to deliver the service in a cost-effective manner.

6.4. Provision of therapeutic interventions supporting parents and babies

6.4.1. Baby’s Sake, delivers therapeutic interventions supporting parents and babies. This is a trauma-informed, attachment-based therapeutic

programme, integrated within local services and working with all relevant stakeholders, including health visitors, midwives, GPs, children's services and domestic abuse services.

- 6.5. Wards Corner, delivers Latin American Stay and Play sessions with a focus on empowering targeted families and providing tools for support and guidance to help mothers build on their social and networking skills to prevent social isolation.
- 6.6. All providers have been delivering services via the Family Hubs Programme since 2023, collaborating with various partners to ensure services are accessible to all. Each of the providers have a well-established presence within the local community, underpinned by strong and sustained relationships with families, senior leaders and managers across our local health, social care, education and voluntary (VCS) sectors. These partnerships enable effective collaboration, support shared priorities, and ensure that services are aligned with the needs and expectations of the communities we serve.
- 6.7. Continuing to use these providers offers best value for money. The proposed providers already deliver grant funded services. Using these providers to deliver elements of the Best Start Family Hubs programme, avoids mobilisation activities already covered within existing contracts and ensures grant conditions are met.
- 6.8. **Contract Performance**
 - 6.8.1. Key Performance Indicators and methods of measurement are integrated within the service specification and will be monitored through contract monitoring meetings, site visits and reports.
 - 6.8.2. The Best Start Family Hubs performance monitoring framework is designed to measure impact, performance, progress and assess the difference the programme is making for families.

Monitoring returns and discussions successfully demonstrated the impact being made across the programme. The providers are extremely passionate and committed to supporting a wide range of families from different cultures and social backgrounds, making a real difference to their lives.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1. The objectives of the Best Start Family Hubs Programme are aligned with several council priorities specifically:
 - Corporate Delivery Plan 2024 – 2026
 - Early Years Strategy 2023 – 2026
 - Early Help Strategy 2024 – 2027

7.2. Social Value - as per Haringey's Contract Standing Orders, use of Social Value Portal (SVP) is mandated for contracts over the value of £500k. The contract award of PIPS will contribute to Haringey's commitment to generate social, economic, and environmental benefits to its residents due to the social value commitments of the provider.

7.3. Corporate Delivery Plan

7.3.1. Theme 3: Children and young people

- Outcome 2 Happy Childhoods - All children across the borough will be happy and healthy as they grow up, feeling safe and secure in their family networks and communities.

7.4. Early Years Strategy

7.4.1. Our vision is for all children across the borough will be happy and healthy as they grow up, feeling safe and secure in their family and in our community.

- **Strategic Aim 1:** To work in partnership with our parents and carers to build resilience and enjoy family life.
- **Strategic Aim 2:** To support parents and babies before and after birth to create the conditions where stress is reduced, positive bonds and attachments can form, and language and communications skills develop so that children are ready for life, enjoyment, and learning.
 - Priority Two: To embed and develop an integrated, multiagency approach to support both pre- and post- birth and childhood through enhanced Children's Centre partnerships and locality based 0-19 Family Hubs.
- **Strategic Aim 3:** To narrow the gap in attainment for different groups of children, ensuring there is equitable access to early education and childcare for all children across the borough.
- **Strategic Aim 4:** To ensure all families have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy Early Years, by improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities for all children.
- **Strategic Aim 5:** Developing partnerships and joined up infrastructure to deliver equitable outcomes and make best use of resources.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Assistant Director of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

8.1. Finance

8.1.1. This report request to approve acceptance of Best Start Family Hubs (formerly known as Family Hubs) funding and award of contracts to various organisations necessary to deliver the Family Hub programme as set out in the delivery plan.

- 8.1.2. It has been confirmed that Haringey will receive the continuation of grant funding for the next three years totalling £4,692,300 and approx. £1.5m being allocated to 2026-2027.
- 8.1.3. This report also seeks approval to award contracts to the three organisations: Whittington Health NHS Trust (£552,548 for 2 years), For Baby's Sake (105,000 for three years) and Wards Corner CBS (£27,595 for three years).
- 8.1.4. The approval to awards contracts as above will have no implication on the General Fund for the council; it will all be grant funded by the Best Start Family Hubs.

8.2. Strategic Procurement

- 8.2.1. Strategic Procurement notes the contents of this report and have been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 8.2.2. The request to accept the grant funding is in accordance with the CSO 21.01. This funding will facilitate the Council to continue delivering the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies (formally known as Family Hubs) Programme for another year which aims to improve the health and education outcomes for babies, children, and families living in Haringey.
- 8.2.3. The Family Hub Project Manager to ensure system and processes are in place to enable the Council to fulfil its obligations set out in grant agreements and mitigate risk of having to repay grant funding, either in full or in pro-rata.
- 8.2.4. Continuation of service delivery is a key requirement of the Funding Agreement for the grant. Changing the service providers at this stage would likely cause delays to mobilisation and commencement of services, thereby jeopardising the timely delivery of the Best Start Family Hub Programme. As a result, there is a significant risk that the associated grant funding could be reduced or withdrawn for this financial year, with potential implications for allocations in future years.
- 8.2.5. The recommendations to award the contracts outlined in paragraphs 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 above are in the best interests of the Council, compliant with the relevant procurement regulations (PSR and Procurement Act 2023), and aligned with the requirements of the CSOs.
- 8.2.6. Contract performance will be monitored through regular reporting, contract management meetings, and site visits to ensure services are delivered effectively and achieve the required outcomes. This approach provides assurance that delivery will remain fully aligned with the performance, quality, and reporting requirements set out in the grant agreement, ensuring compliance and safeguarding continued access to the grant funding

8.3. Legal

- 8.3.1. The Director for Legal and Governance was consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 8.3.2. Pursuant to the Council's Contract Standing Order (CSO) 21.01 Cabinet has authority to approve the receipt of a grant where the value of the grant is £500,000 or more and as such the recommendation in paragraph 3.1.1 is in line with the provisions of the Council's CSO.
- 8.3.3. The recommendation in paragraph 3.1.2 of the report to award a contract for the provision of Parent Infant Psychology Service to the Whittington Health NHS Trust, commencing on the 1st May 2026 to 30th April 2028, at a cost of £550,620 is permitted under the Council CSO 10.01 and Regulation 9 - Direct Award Process C of the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023.
- 8.3.4. The Director for Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) sees no legal reasons preventing the approval of the recommendation in the report.

8.4. Equalities

- 8.4.1. The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 8.4.2. The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/fait, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.
- 8.4.3. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 8.4.4. The proposal outlined in this report is to award contracts for PIPS and Parenting Support Services. The proposal is not expected to have a disproportionately negative impact on any group with a protected characteristic.
- 8.4.5. This decision will ensure the council can continue to successfully deliver the Family Hubs Programme which will have a positive impact on service users, namely residents who are pregnant or in maternity and children and young people who benefit from access to the hubs. The provision of sex-specific services for females, such as breastfeeding support, also means that the decision will have a positive impact on this protected characteristic.

8.4.6. As an organisation carrying out a public function on behalf of a public body, the Providers Whittington Health NHS Trust, For Baby's Sake, and Wards Corner CBS will be obliged to have due regard for the need to achieve the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as stated above. Appropriate contract management arrangements will be established to ensure that the delivery of the service requirements does not result in any preventable or disproportionate inequality.

9. **Use of Appendices**

9.1. None

10. **Background Papers**

10.1. None