

The Lancashire Best Start in Life Plan 2026 - 2029



Supporting children,
young people and
families to succeed
in Lancashire

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1. Executive Summary

Lancashire's Best Start in Life Local Plan sets out a shared ambition for all partners to significantly increase the number of children starting school ready to learn, thrive and achieve by 2028. The plan focuses on the critical early years from pregnancy to age five, recognising that early childhood is the most important period for shaping lifelong outcomes. Evidence shows that early intervention delivers the greatest and most lasting impact on children's learning, health and wellbeing.

The plan aligns with the national Best Start in Life Strategy (2025) and the first 1001 critical days vision. Locally, it supports Lancashire County Council's priorities of *Better Lives for All*, *Stronger Communities*, and the Multi-Agency Early Help Strategy. Lancashire's target is for 73.8% of children to reach a Good Level of Development (GLD) by 2028. The Local Plan is built on four core principles:

- Strategic investment directed to where it has greatest impact.
- A skilled, connected workforce delivering high-quality, consistent support.
- Family involvement through co-design, co-production and lived experience.
- Improving equity by prioritising support for disadvantaged communities.

Strong partnership governance underpins delivery, led by the Best Start in Life Board and four thematic working groups. Partners will use shared outcomes, aligned pathways, pooled resources and joint protocols to avoid silo-working and deliver a unified early-years system.

Comprehensive needs assessment will highlight where we have significant inequalities in child development across Lancashire, pockets of deprivation, rural access challenges and rising Early Help demand. These insights will guide our targeted actions, supported by comprehensive data and shared intelligence across health, education, early years and the VCSE sector.

The delivery model builds on Lancashire's expanding Family Hubs network, and through the delivery of this plan, families will experience clear, consistent pathways from conception to school, including strengthened health visiting, enhanced home-visiting, focused speech and language support, and smooth school transitions.

Children and families are central to the plan, and their voices will shape services. Developing ways to deliver a modern digital and data infrastructure will enable earlier identification of need, and shared systems will improve interoperability. Predictive analytics and a 'test and learn' approach will strengthen decision-making and support the scaling of effective interventions countywide.

Workforce development is central to the plan. Lancashire will deliver a coordinated training framework, which will focus on joint training of professionals working across sectors and will embed practice development in key areas of relational, trauma-informed practice, and strengths-based working.

This plan sets out how Lancashire will harness its collective strengths, evidence base, and local insight to deliver the scale of change required. It provides a clear framework for aligning programmes, investment and workforce capacity so that support is high-quality,

timely and consistently available. Where support is delivered earlier, more effectively, and in ways that are responsive to what families tell us matters most.

Our shared mission is to drive sustained, measurable improvements for babies, young children and families, with a relentless focus on those communities where inequalities remain most persistent. By embedding prevention, innovation and partnership at the heart of our approach, Lancashire will deliver measurable and lasting improvements that transform children's early life experiences and shape brighter futures for generations to come.

Together, partners across Lancashire will build a more equitable, integrated and impactful early-years children's system, ensuring every child has the very best start in life and enters school ready to flourish.

Lancashire Best Start Local Plan

Lancashire aims to give every child the best start in life, supporting a record number of children to be school-ready by 2028 through.

Best Start for Families Hubs

- A network of Hubs providing families a core offer of integrated services
- Focused in areas with highest need
- Outreach functions meeting families in local communities



Ensuring children are ready for school by 2028

Integrated Place-Based Pathways

- Support from conception to school transition
- Clear pathways to access help at the right time
- Intensive support in disadvantaged communities



Partnership Across the System

- Strong coordination with health, education, and VCSF partners
- Co-production with families/communities
- Cross-sector action towards shared goals & objectives

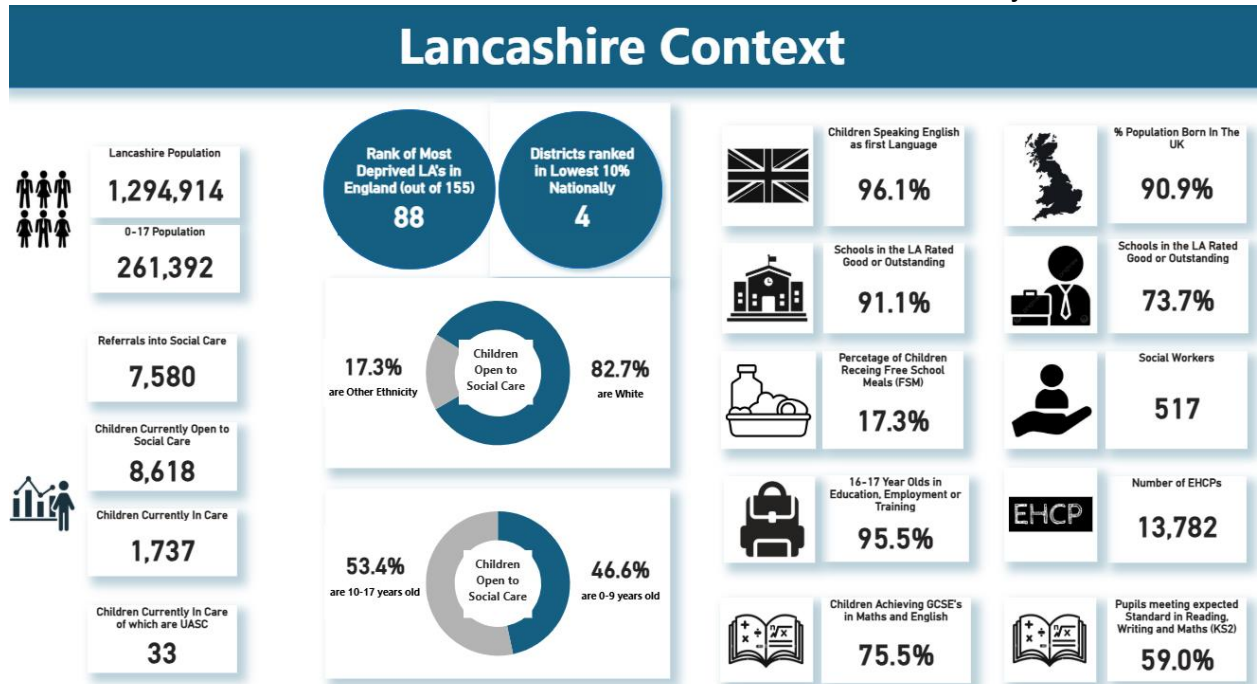


A Skilled Workforce

- Confident, connected and highly trained
- Shared practice standards across services
- Data and quality systems driving improvement

2. Our Place and Our People

Lancashire is a county of dynamic contrasts and strong local identities. Its polycentric geography spans rural settlements, distinctive coastal communities, and major urban centres - most notably the cities of Preston and Lancaster, and key towns such as Burnley, Ormskirk and Chorley. Around 80% of the county is rural, with many small towns and villages sitting alongside more densely populated urban areas. With a population of around 1.3 million, Lancashire remains predominantly White (88.6%), the last Census records 85.2% identifying as White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British. There are significant Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, particularly in East Lancashire and Preston, that are above the England average. The county includes areas of considerable affluence (for example, parts of Ribble Valley, Wyre and South Ribble) alongside some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, notably in parts of Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Preston, and some coastal communities. These disparities are reflected in health inequalities, with pronounced gaps in healthy life expectancy within short distances. Demand is visible in children’s outcomes at all levels of the children's system.



This snapshot highlights both strengths and inequalities across Lancashire. It underlines the importance of early support that is well-coordinated and focused where it is needed most, particularly in communities where children face the greatest barriers to achieving the Best Start in Life.

2.1 What our families have said

In putting together this plan, we followed up over 150 families and engaged over 300 children about what matters to them and their views and feelings about our services.

- 94% of families felt they got the information or support when they needed it from their Family Hub support services and 91% rated this as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- 89% rated the impact of support they had from Family Hubs on their family as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- 83% of families said they were likely to recommend the Family Hubs to their friends, neighbours and wider family.

We value the feedback we receive from children and families and will ensure we take this forward in our thinking and planning.



"I just wanted to say a massive thanks for showing us that one stop shop. We finally are getting some help...a massive weight off my shoulders xx so appreciate it ALOT XX"

"Thank you so much for all your help you have literally changed my life for the better. I would not be where I am now if it weren't for you. When we moved round here, life was like a 1 out of 10, and now it's like an 8/9 out of 10".



"We liked the consistency of the parenting group and found the information helpful. Our 10yr. old son has historically been reluctant to go any groups but is now attending 'colourful footsteps' SEND sessions every week. This is a massive turnaround for him"

3. The importance of early years

Early childhood is the most critical period for shaping lifelong outcomes. High-quality early experiences drive learning, health and wellbeing, and investment in this window delivers the greatest, most sustained impact. A co-ordinated, equitable early-years children's system is therefore essential to achieving school readiness, narrowing inequalities and strengthening long-term population outcomes. Early action is not optional but foundational: by aligning investment, workforce capacity and partnerships in the earliest years, local systems can prevent disadvantage, strengthen family and community resilience, and ensure every child starts school ready to thrive.

Lancashire's plan aligns services, data and delivery behind a shared mission to support families earlier, more effectively and more consistently, reflecting national expectations, local need and robust evidence on what improves outcomes.

4. Strategic Context

4.1 National and Legal Framework

Lancashire is committed to ensuring that by 2028 a record number of children enter school ready to thrive. The plan aligns with the Best Start in Life Strategy (July 2025) and the vision for the first 1001 critical days and Parenting Strategy. Delivery sits within the following legal frameworks:

- Childcare Act 2006 – Duties to improve outcomes, reduce inequalities, secure sufficient childcare, inform parents, and regulate/inspect early years (including the EYFS).
- Children and Families Act 2014 – Reforms for vulnerable children, notably SEND; early identification (Section 23) enabling strategic planning and joint working.
- Child Poverty Act 2010 – National income-based targets, progress reporting, and duties for strategies and partnership working to reduce socio-economic disadvantage.
- Equality Act 2010 – Prohibits discrimination; requires inclusive, equitable early-years environments, reasonable adjustments and barrier removal.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – Sets out civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all under-18s, the most widely ratified human rights treaty.

4.2 Local Context and alignment with wider council and multi-agency priorities

The plan aligns with Better Lives for All and Stronger Communities and sits within Lancashire's Multi-Agency Early Help Strategy. It supports prevention, early intervention and improved outcomes, and aligns with the Children and Young People's Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Education Strategy, and Corporate Prevention Framework, complementing emerging Neighbourhood Health plans.

It reflects DfE communications (Aug 2025) and Lancashire's GLD target of 73.8% by 2028. The plan:

- Aligns with Early Help transformation, Family Help reform, SEND improvement, Neighbourhood Health, Poverty and Resilience, and wider-determinants/public health priorities.
- Builds on community strengths, VCSE partners and strong locality networks.
- Focuses on reducing inequalities across urban, rural and coastal areas.

This is a live plan: as delivery and data evolves, Lancashire will refine the approach to stay on track to 2028 and sustain longer-term improvements



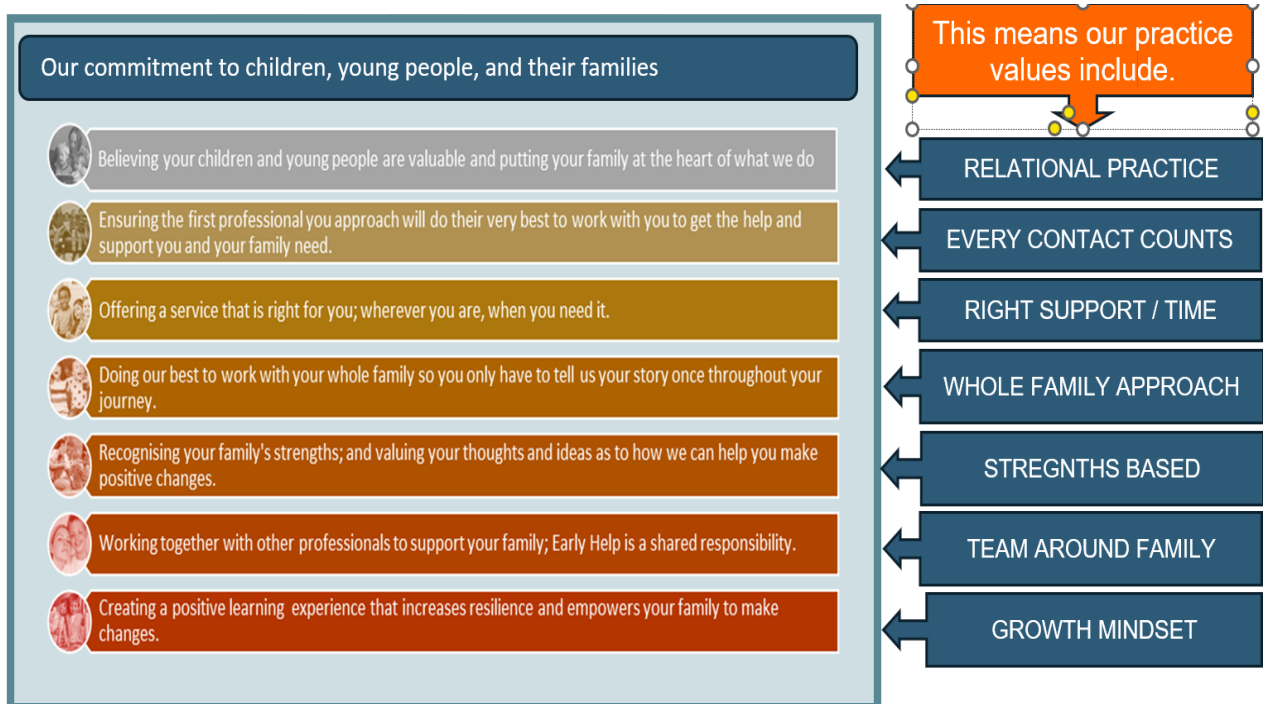
5. Vision, Values and Principles

5.1 Our Vision for Best Start in Life

To give every child the best start in life and significantly increase the number of children arriving at school ready to learn, thrive and achieve, unlocking potential for a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Lancashire.

Our bold vision drives a system-wide commitment to act early, work differently and aim higher. It recognises that transforming early childhood outcomes requires more than isolated initiatives; it demands a united, ambitious and whole-system commitment. We will harness the collective leadership, expertise and reach of partners and work collaboratively across the local authority, health, education, early years, voluntary and community sectors. We will reshape the way families experience support—creating a seamless, equitable and accessible offer from pregnancy to school entry.

How we work with children, young people and their families is shaped by shared values and demonstrates our commitment to them.



5.2. Our Values and Principles

Our plan focuses on four core principles:

1. Directing investment strategically for maximum impact

We will use Best Start for Families Hubs (BSFHs) funding and wider national investment intelligently, ensuring that resources are deployed to increase reach, enhance quality, harness innovation and build sustainable results.

New and existing programmes will be brought together into a coherent local system that maximises early intervention and supports families at every stage of the early years. This includes strengthening services delivered in partnership with the voluntary, community, faith

and social enterprise (VCFS) sector, ensuring they are enhanced—not displaced—by new provision.

2. Building capacity, quality, and a strong partnership network

Lancashire will develop a confident and connected early years/ children's workforce and system. Our plan sets out how we will improve workforce development and enhance the consistency and quality of early years support and education offers across the county. We will create a united network of partner organisations—statutory, VCFS, and community-based, collaborating and joint working towards a shared mission rooted in the needs of families. This will help us maximise the scale of offers and their impact, and includes leveraging the reach and expertise of local charitable organisations delivering home-visiting and aligned interventions.

3. Family involvement.

We recognise that parents, carers, babies and young children are experts in their own experiences and essential partners in shaping support. By embedding co-design and co-production throughout our planning and delivery, we will ensure that services are responsive, inclusive and grounded in what families say they need. This approach strengthens trusted relationships, empowers families to influence decisions, and helps create a more equitable and effective Best Start in Life offer for every child.

4. Prioritising disadvantaged communities and improving equity

This plan ensures that families and children who need support most, benefit first. We will prioritise communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage while preserving and strengthening successful existing provision. Our approach will ensure targeted support is balanced with universal access, enabling sustained improvements for all families while closing developmental gaps. Specifically, this plan recognises the disparities that exist for SEND children and their families and will ensure that children and families experience timely, coordinated, and compassionate support—rooted in inclusion, early identification, and strong partnerships—so that needs are understood early and met effectively. By empowering families, building confident and skilled practitioners, and shaping responsive, accessible services, we will reduce inequality and remove barriers to learning, development, and wellbeing.

6. Partnership, Governance & Strategic Priorities

6.1 System Governance

Lancashire will lead a unified system responding to the needs of children pre-birth to five, improving GLD and narrowing the disadvantage gap.



Governance is provided by the Best Start in Life Board (a sub-group of the Lancashire Children and Young People's Partnership) with delivery oversight through four working groups:

- Early beginnings and maternal health
- Child development and school readiness
- Oral health and healthier behaviours
- System integrated services

A single strategic framework (common outcomes, joint protocols, pooled/grant funding and aligned pathways) will guide decision-making. Multi-agency teams will co-locate delivery and jointly assess needs at locality level—bringing Health, Early Help, Early Years, Education and VCSE partners together around families, not organisational boundaries. A shared performance dashboard, regular joint planning, cross-sector supervision and integrated workforce development will ensure consistent, relational, joined-up practice avoiding silos and balancing multi-agency agendas.

6.2 Targeting Resources and Assets

Programmes, resources and local assets will be directed to where they have the greatest impact—targeting investment and workforce capacity to communities with the deepest inequalities and prioritising evidence-based programmes. Family Hubs, early-years settings, health visiting teams, VCSE partners and neighbourhood assets will be deployed to create an interconnected, inclusive early-years ecosystem that brings support closer to families.

6.3 Six strategic priorities for Best Start in Life in Lancashire

We will work together across health, education, early help, and communities to ensure every child and family in Lancashire can thrive, belong, and achieve their full potential. By embedding prevention, equity, intelligent use of data, and meaningful participation at the heart of our system, we will identify needs earlier, reduce inequalities, and deliver joined-up support that is shaped by families and evidence.

Our ambition is for all children—regardless of background or circumstance—to have the best possible start in life, supported by a unified workforce, integrated pathways, and strong partnerships.

1. Strengthen early child development

By taking a preventative and proactive approach - with a focus on speech, language, communication, social and emotional development. We will focus on early identification and intervention and what we know from research will make the biggest difference to positive outcomes for children and working with parents to improve learning in the home environment.

2. Increase reach and access to services for families

Especially in disadvantaged areas and for those children and their families who we know experience the greatest disparity in terms of access to support that is proportionate and needs led.

3. Build a unified early years support workforce

Across Health, Early Help, Early Years, Education & Inclusion and VCFS.

4. Use intelligent data and digital systems

To drive improvement.

5. Develop integrated pathways

From conception to school transition.

6. Strengthen partnerships and co-production

Ensuring families shape our delivery.



7 Data and Local Needs Assessment and Analysis

7.1 Data and Performance around a 'Good Level of Development'

Our Lancashire target for school readiness, which has been set at 73.8% by 2028. Our current position on school readiness - Good Level of Development (GLD), from 2023/24, was that 64.8% of Lancashire-12 children achieved a Good Level of Development. Although broadly in line with the Northwest (64.4%) and above Blackpool (63.2%), this is below the national average of 67.7%.

Performance varies significantly by child characteristics, highlighting persistent inequalities.

- Girls continue to outperform boys, with 72.3% of girls achieving GLD compared with 56.9% of boys. Communication and language, literacy and early mathematics remain weaker areas overall, reflecting challenges in early speech, language and home learning environments.
- Children experiencing disadvantage are much less likely to achieve a GLD. Children eligible for Free School Meals, those living in areas of higher deprivation, and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) consistently have lower outcomes than their peers. These gaps mirror wider inequalities in income, health and access to services across Lancashire, particularly in parts of Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Preston and some of Lancashire's coastal communities, such as Fleetwood.
- Summer-born boys are one of the lowest-performing groups nationally at the end of Reception. National EYFS data shows that around half of summer-born boys achieve a Good Level of Development (approximately 50–55%), compared with over 70% of autumn-born girls. This reflects the combined impact of age within the cohort and the gender attainment gap.

Trends over time show slow improvement, but progress is not yet at the pace needed to meet our future ambitions. Lancashire's GLD increased slightly from 64.4% in 2022/23 to 64.8% in 2023/24, equating to around 50 more children reaching the expected level of development. However, this remains some distance from the nationally set ambition of 73.8% by 2028, reinforcing the need for sustained, system-wide early intervention.

Our data also suggests that challenges can emerge well before children reach Reception. Lancashire Insight highlights lower outcomes at earlier developmental checkpoints for some children, particularly in communication, problem-solving and personal-social skills, indicating that opportunities for support are being missed earlier in the child's journey.

Together, this evidence underlines why Lancashire's Best Start in Life approach focuses on earlier identification, targeted support and integrated pathways from pregnancy through to school entry. Improving our GLD outcomes will depend not only on early years education quality, but on coordinated action across health, early help, family hubs and community-based support to address the wider determinants of children's development.

7.2 Scope and Method

Our forward actions around Best Start in Life will be informed by undertaking a countywide local needs assessment for babies and children under 5yrs in Lancashire and their families. This will bring together evidence from Lancashire's early years data and local intelligence, including key agency insights into children whose needs are not being met due to their absence from accessing services. This will demonstrate a clear picture of what children and families need and help us to strategically target programmes and funding and making the best use of local assets and expertise.

Our needs assessment will draw upon baseline information about population characteristics, child development milestones and school readiness measures to understand current performance and persistent inequalities across districts and communities in Lancashire where outcomes vary significantly (place-based trends/identified wards etc.) and provide us with diagnostic analysis of what the data tells us, including strengths and gaps.

Several early years indicators in Lancashire show challenges and inequalities that underpin this plan's focus on prevention and targeted, joined-up support. For example.

- Mother's smoking status at time of delivery (SATOD). In 2024/25, the Lancashire-12 SATOD rate was 7.5%, which remains significantly higher than England (6.1%), with higher rates in several Lancashire districts.
- Infant feeding (breastfeeding at 6–8 weeks). In 2023/24, 42.8% of infants in the Lancashire-12 area were totally or partially breastfed at 6–8 weeks, which was significantly lower than England (52.7%).

We will also consider contextual data such as access to family and health services, the take up of key entitlements and attendance for services. It will also consider the needs of vulnerable groups and those with emerging challenges, including families experiencing deprivation or isolation and where gaps exist in current systems of response. From this we will be able to establish performance baselines and more easily track our progress moving forwards.

The needs assessment will review the strengths and gaps within the public sector services and VCFS landscape and wider community assets, noting the value of well-established charities and the variation in sustainability and reach across areas. Comprehensive service mapping—covering universal, targeted and specialist provision—identified through our service finder resource, will help us to identify where capacity is strong, where variation exists, and where improvements or integration are required to best meet local needs.

Findings are published via a BI Dashboard linked to child-level JSNA to inform targeted, place-based action and forming a school readiness baseline.

8. Theory of Change for Best Start in Life in Lancashire

Problem / Need Lancashire faces persistent inequalities in early childhood outcomes, with notable variation across districts in communication and language development, school readiness and early years health indicators. Families often experience fragmented support, with inconsistent pathways between Early Help, health visiting, midwifery, early years settings, SEND services and community organisations.

Inputs 12 Lancashire Family Hubs, providing universal and targeted early years support.
Family Hubs & Start for Life funding, plus local Early Help and Public Health investment.
Multidisciplinary workforce across Early Help, health visiting, midwifery, early years, SEND and the VCFSE sector.
Evidence-based programmes including perinatal mental health support, parenting programmes and early communication interventions.
Digital and data infrastructure, case systems, public health datasets, EYFS tracking and new Family Hubs dashboards.
Local partnerships with NHS providers, schools, nurseries, libraries, community groups and children's centres.
Countywide governance, including Health & Wellbeing Board, Children & Families Partnership and Early Help leadership structures.
Existing community assets, including libraries, children's centres, community venues and volunteer networks.

Activities **Practice and Pathway Development**
 Embed Best Start in Life principles into all Family Hub pathways, from pregnancy to 5yrs
Standardise Early Help assessments and planning to ensure early, joined-up support.
 Strengthen perinatal, infant feeding, early language and parenting offers using evidence-informed models.
Workforce Development
 Deliver multidisciplinary training on early childhood development, trauma-informed practice and whole-family working.
 Create shared induction, supervision and practice development across partners.
Integrated Working
 Expand co-location of early years, health and Early Help teams across hubs.
 Improve information sharing and integrated casework for families with higher support needs.
Access and Community Engagement
 Improve navigation through a clearer Family Hubs "front door" and digital offer.
 Target outreach to underserved communities (e.g., rural families, low-income households, ethnically diverse communities).
 Co-produce services with parents, carers and local VCFSE organisations.
Quality and Outcomes
 Implement shared outcomes framework and dashboard.
 Regular audits, reflective practice sessions and continuous improvement cycles.

Outputs BSIL practice standards implemented consistently across all 12 hubs.
 Workforce trained and confident in delivering early, evidence-informed support.
 Improved referral pathways between Health Visiting, Midwifery, Early Help and Early Years.
 Increased availability and take-up of evidence-based parenting and perinatal offers.
 More multi-agency action plans and joint visits for families.
 New dashboards providing real-time insights on engagement, outcomes and inequalities.
 Increased community-led activity within hubs and improved reach to priority groups.

Impact Lancashire becomes a county where every child has the best possible start in life, with reduced inequalities and improved life chances. Families receive consistent, high-quality early support, when and where they need it, supported by a skilled and confident workforce. The early help system is cohesive, preventative and joined up, helping create stronger, safer and more resilient communities.



Short-Term Outcomes (0–12 mths)

- Staff across Early Help, health, early years and VCFSE have shared understanding of Bsil principles.
- Families experience clearer pathways, better information and easier access to support.
- Earlier identification of needs through improved integration with health visiting, midwifery and early years settings.
- Engagement increases across communities, especially in districts with lower baseline access.
- Practices become more consistent across hubs with improved quality assurance results.

Medium-Term Outcomes (12–24 mths)

- More families receive timely, preventative support, reducing escalation to statutory services.
- Parents report increased confidence, wellbeing, attachment and capacity to support learning at home.
- Children show improved early development, especially communication and language.
- Inequalities in early years outcomes begin to narrow between localities and demographic groups.
- Multi-agency working becomes embedded, with smoother handovers and fewer duplicated contacts.

Long-Term Outcomes (24+ mths)

- Improved school readiness across Lancashire, with significant gains in areas previously below the county average.
- Families report higher resilience and reduced crisis presentation.
- Demand on children's social care (CIN, CP, CLA) stabilises or reduces where appropriate.
- Early Help and Family Hubs operate as a fully integrated, preventative system across the county.
- Communities are more connected, and families more engaged with local support networks

9 'Reaching a good level of development' - What success will look like

Lancashire will deliver against its DfE-confirmed school readiness target (73.8%) by 2028. Success will mean:

- Increased proportions of children achieving expected levels in communication, language, personal, social and emotional development
- Greater uptake of funded early education entitlements, especially among disadvantaged families and families of SEND children
- Improved parenting capacity and the quality of the learning made available to their children by parents in the home learning environment
- Improved maternal and parent-infant mental health indicators
- Consistent, high-quality service access through Best Start Family Hubs
- Increased reach of targeted home-visiting interventions
- Reduced inequalities across priority communities – narrowing the gap.
- Generally improved standards of good health – indicating healthiest generation of children
- Children reaching their individual potential and fulfilling parental aspirations in terms of access to early, needs led support and intervention which enables their child to strive and thrive.

Progress will be monitored annually, with milestones for 2026, 2027, and 2028 outlined in our action plan.

Focussing on those most in need of support will be important. We will want to remember that while achieving GLD targets is important, we must also recognise that many children make significant, life-changing progress even if they do not meet formal performance measures. Their individual 'distance travelled' represents meaningful improvement that should be valued and celebrated.

10 Partnership working and Delivery Model

Lancashire will organise, integrate and scale services to achieve 2028 targets, building on the Family Hubs Model and Local Early Help Partnerships—where place-based networks are united around a shared mission with locality development plans already in place.

FAMILY HUBS

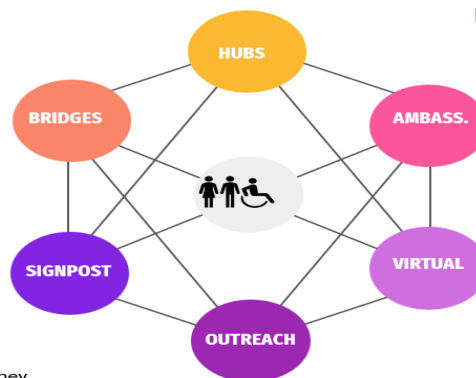
Single access points hosting a wide variety of integrated/ multi-agency family support services including those identified in the national specification for Family Hubs (Annex E/F)

FAMILY HUB BRIDGES

Venues providing safe spaces and services in support of families in a wide variety of settings incl. schools, community venues and leisure centres. Providing practical support, brief interventions, using early help assessments and plans to identify and respond to needs.

FAMILY HUBS SIGNPOSTS

Places, people and services acting as an information network for families, young people and children - warmly directing them to where they can receive wider support or more specialist services within the network.



FAMILY HUBS AMBASSADORS

Key Individuals advocating and telling the story on a day-to-day basis

VIRTUAL + DIGITAL

Services delivery by digital tools including virtual front door

OUTREACH

Children and Families practitioners in health, education and community safety



From the outset in Lancashire, the Family Hubs model has been about amplifying the benefits of working together, to achieve better outcomes, and our networks have included several key components contributing to their success.

10.1 Family Hubs as Delivery Infrastructure

29 (rising to 34) strategically located Hubs provide a consistent core offer with co-located or integrated health, Early Help, early years and VCSE delivery, plus outreach into priority neighbourhoods and rural/coastal communities to increase reach and accessibility.

Within this, we have identified 12 'Best Start Family Hubs'. One in each district area, acting as a focal point and 'centre of excellence' in provision of integrated services for the under 5yrs. (Appendix 1)

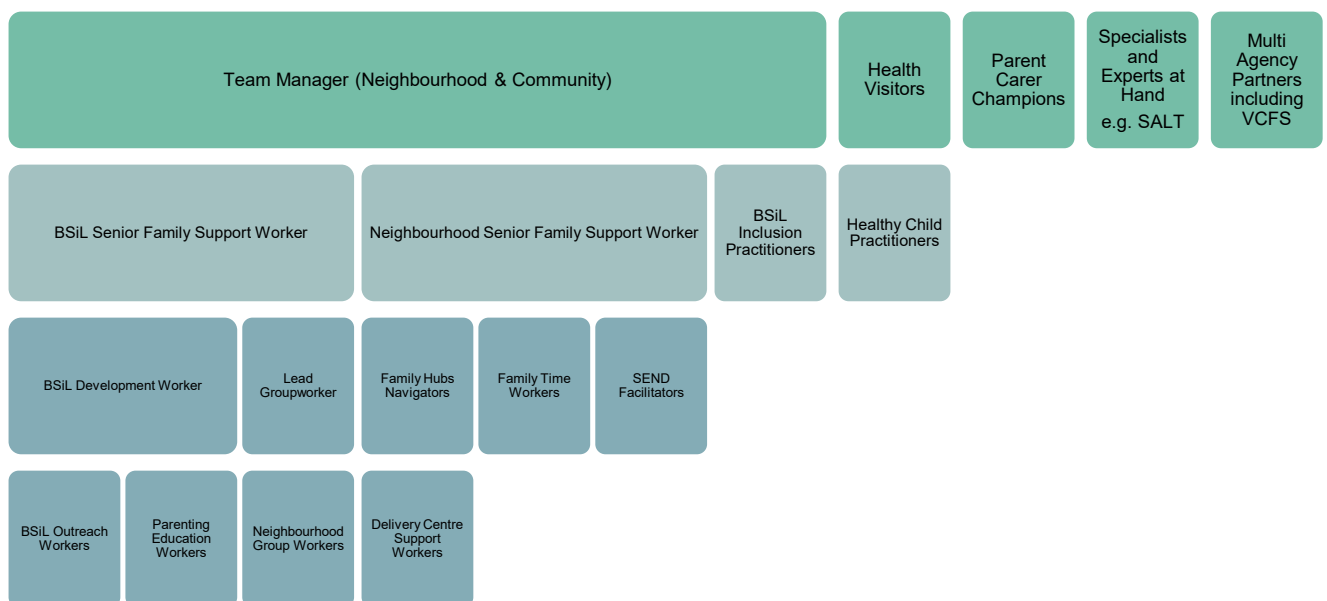
Features include.

- Parenting support, home-visiting, relationship-based interventions
- Integrated health pathways (midwifery, HV mandated contacts, infant feeding)
- Early identification and Team Around the Family (TAF) responses
- Support for transitions (pregnancy→birth, birth→two, early years→school)

Our Best Start in Life local delivery plan will build on this baseline and infrastructure to further extend the scope and scale of support to families with children under 5 years, including a commitment to addressing barriers which limit accessibility to working families. For e.g. dads and male carers, working families, families new to the country and those with limited support networks who require childcare/creche facilities.

Localised operational delivery teams will integrate alongside existing council staff whose areas of responsibility overlap with Best Start activity and ambitions and link directly to Family Hubs.

Family Hubs Integrated Teams



10.2 Integrated Pathways that ensure the right help at the right time

Lancashire's delivery model is built around clear, structured pathways that describe every family's journey through the early years.

Pathway 1: Conception to Pregnancy Support

- Early engagement with midwifery and signposting to support services
- Universal and targeted antenatal support
- VCFS outreach for harder-to-reach families

Pathway 2: Birth to Age Two – Foundations for Learning

- Health visiting contacts strengthened through close BSFH partnership
- Universal services (infant feeding, parenting support, safe sleep, maternal mental health)
- Enhanced home-visiting models delivered with VCFS partners
- Identification of developmental concerns and fast-tracked needs led support

Pathway 3: Age Two to School – Early Learning and Development

- Focused support on speech, language, communication, and social development
- Strong links with early years providers and schools
- Targeted programmes for families at risk of poor school readiness
- Support for childcare access and take-up of funded entitlements
- Identification of developmental concerns and fast-tracked needs led support

Pathway 4: Transitions and Continuity

- Smooth transition from health visiting into early years settings
- Robust preparation for school entry supported by data sharing, joint planning, and targeted transition support
- Ensuring children with emerging or diagnosed needs experience continuity of support

These pathways will be embedded across all localities, with clear protocols, cross-agency roles, and consistent expectations.

10.3 Targeted Place-Based Intensification.

Lancashire will deliver a stronger, more intensive offer in the most deprived communities, enhanced home-visiting and home learning support, additional workforce capacity (e.g., early communication, parent-infant relationship programmes) and closer integration with schools/settings to improve transition into Reception. The delivery model depends on cross-system collective action which Lancashire will deliver through all partner agencies.

Health partners

- Further integration of Health Visitors/Health Engagement Leads/Midwifery input into hubs
- Joint assessments and shared developmental observations
- A unified focus on infant and parent mental health

Education and Early Years providers

- Collaborative work with nurseries, childminders, Schools and Educational Psychology to support language, social, and emotional development
- Data-driven approaches to early identification
- Shared training and practice improvement programmes

VCFS sector

- Community-led outreach and engagement
- Home-visiting and targeted support programmes
- Harnessing culturally competent, trusted relationships to expand reach

Local authority Early Help

- Workforce development, commissioning, and hub coordination
- Ensuring the right early help response is activated when needed

This integrated approach ensures families experience a coherent system rather than fragmented services.

10.4 Workforce and Quality Model

A unified early-years workforce, trained together across sectors; shared practice standards, assessments and resources; joint supervision; and co-located multi-agency delivery teams, ensuring consistently high-quality, relational interactions for families. Workforce development will underpin the delivery model and supports the consistency required to achieve system-wide improvement.

11. Involving children and parents**11.1. Children and Young People's Participation**

Lancashire is committed to ensuring that children, young people and families are active partners in shaping the Best Start in Life (BSiL) offer. Their insight, expertise and lived experience are essential to designing effective, accessible and culturally relevant services. Lancashire uses the Lundy Model (UNCRC Article 12): space, voice, audience, influence. Children will help design and evaluate services via age-appropriate methods (creative workshops, storytelling, digital surveys, school-based activity) and child-friendly outcome measures.

Children and young people will contribute directly to shaping services designed for them. Our approach will include:

- Age-appropriate engagement methods such as creative workshops, storytelling, digital surveys, and school-based activities, with groups to co-design resources, environments, and communication approaches.
- Involvement in evaluating services, including developing child-friendly outcome measures and feedback tools.

11.2. Parent Voice and Leadership

Parents will have structured opportunities to influence decisions and drive continuous improvement through:

- Parent Panels: Regularly convened panels representing a diverse range of families, including those from priority communities. Panels will co-develop local priorities, test ideas, and shape delivery models.
- Thematic Parent Working Groups: Topic-focused groups (e.g., maternity transitions, SEND support, parenting support) enabling parents with specialist knowledge or lived experience to contribute deeply.

- Lived Experience Forums: Ensuring that the system reflects what matters most to families. These forums will bring together parents, carers, and young people with a range of experiences and provide a safe, supportive environment to share insights. We can jointly identify barriers, test proposed changes, and highlight what is working well to inform both county-wide strategy and localised delivery (e.g., Lancashire Parent Carer Forum)

11.3. Digital User Testing and Local Co-Design

Parents and young people (including those with lower digital confidence) will test prototypes and pathways; each district will host regular co-design events with families, practitioners and VCSE partners—grounding solutions in local assets and experience.

11.4. Feedback Loops and Removing Barriers

“You said, we did” updates; participation data on local dashboards; parent representation in governance. We will use outreach in community spaces (faith groups, libraries, cultural centres and settings), peer-led conversations, accessible venues/hybrid options, reimbursement for travel/childcare and flexible meeting times to reach seldom-heard families.

12. Removing barriers to engagement and Reducing Inequalities

Inequalities can begin early and have a lasting impact on children’s health, development and life chances with some families experiencing greater impact due to factors such as poverty, poor housing, access to health and other services. Our ambition is for this to change and through our Best Start in Life approach, we will work together to reduce inequalities and remove barriers to support.

We will do this by focusing on delivering activities underpinned by our values and principles including.

- Strengths based practice
- Trauma-informed approach
- Culturally responsive services
- Strengthening workforce skills
- Improving access to entitlements
- Children and families voice and influence

13. Digital, Data and Information-Sharing Infrastructure

The delivery model is supported by a strong digital foundation.

- Shared data and intelligence approach across BSFHs, Early Years, Health, Education and Inclusion and VCSF.
- Promotion and access to activities, advice and information for parents via digital services and clear messaging.

- BI Dashboard to track reach, engagement, quality and impact against 2028 targets.
- Strengthened Information-Sharing Agreements for seamless referrals and integrated support.
- Data-driven decision-making at locality and county levels.
- Data Lake enabling cohort tracking over time, master data management and predictive analytics.

This infrastructure enables earlier identification, sharper targeting and precise monitoring, with transparency and a single, reliable evidence base. Over time, it supports testing, scaling what works, and rapid adaptation through common data standards, interoperability and improved data confidence across the workforce.

14. Innovation, Test & Learn & Continuous Improvement

A continuous learning cycle (locality reviews; learning loops with partners; quarterly system-board data reviews; co-production) keeps the system responsive and aligned to 2028 ambitions. We are committed to identifying effective practice, understanding why it works, and adapting and scaling it across the partnership.

Working with Department for Education's EPIC Team on the '*Best Start in Life Systems Innovation Project*', we have identified four priority challenges to work on.

- Engagement of under-represented/easy-to-exclude groups (e.g., dads/male carers; families with intergenerational mistrust).
- Ensuring GLD reflects lasting progress rather than short-term gains.
- Local sharing of resources and best practice to build capacity, connectivity and shared strategy, and harnessing the power of influential community leaders to support with this.
- Recognising children's differences (Age, Socio-economic background, physical/mental health, SEND) in interpreting GLD.

We are launching Test & Learn pilots in three localities focused on the first and third priority. Learning will inform county-wide improvement, so innovation is grounded in real experience and delivers meaningful change

15. Workforce Development

15.1 County-Wide Approach

We will build a confident, connected and high-quality workforce across early years, health, children's services, Family Hubs and VCSE. Building on our existing county-wide training framework, we will ensure consistent, evidence-based learning (including trauma-informed, relational practice), expand joint training through the Early Help offer, and grow cross-sector supervision and peer learning.



15.2 Measuring Progress

	Example outcome indicators
Capacity	Higher retention; reduced vacancies.
Skills & Training	Agreed core multi-agency curriculum; improved confidence (pre/post).
Collaboration	Joint supervision & peer learning; better understanding of roles and pathways (annual survey).
Quality & Consistency	Audits show year-on-year improvement in Early Help assessments/plans/referrals; increased adherence to trauma-informed standards.
Impact on Families	Shorter waits; improved access in areas with enhanced capacity; higher-quality interactions (observation/feedback).
Workforce Experience	Higher satisfaction with development; stronger perceptions of collaboration; reduced stress with enhanced supervision/reflective practice.

16. Communications Plan

We will ensure all families know about BSFHs, can access help early, and understand available support through clear, consistent messaging—combining targeted digital engagement with visible community outreach and VCSE-led activity tailored to local needs. Consistent branding across Lancashire will strengthen recognition of the BSFHs, while regular communication of successes and shared learning across partners will help build trust, promote early help, and reinforce a unified best start in life offer for every family.

Appendix 1 - Best Start Family Hubs locations.

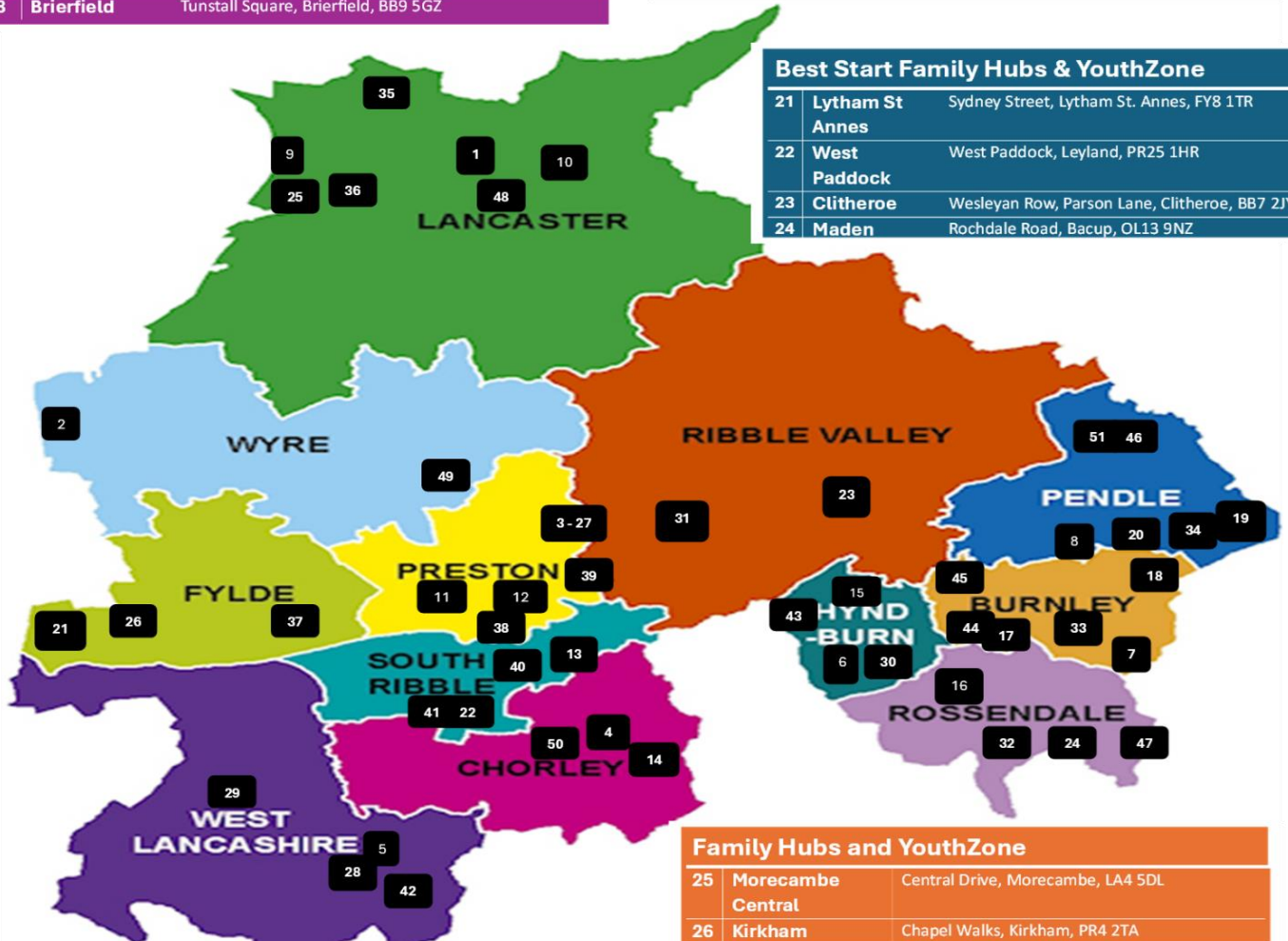
Lancashire Family Support Locations

Best Start Family Hubs

1	Lune Park	Ryelands Park, Owen Road, Lancaster, LA1 2LN
2	Fleetwood	North Albert Street, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 6AJ
3	Ribbleton	Ribbleton Hall Drive, Ribbleton, Preston, PR2 6EE
4	Highfield	Wright Street, Chorley, PR6 0SL
5	Eavesdale	Tanhouse, Skelmersdale, WN8 6AU
6	The Park	Norfolk Grove, Church, Accrington, BB5 4RY
7	Burnley Wood	33 Brunswick Street, Burnley, BB11 3NY
8	Brierfield	Tunstall Square, Brierfield, BB9 5GZ

Family Hubs

9	Poulton	Clark Street, Morecambe, LA4 5HT
10	Firbank	Firbank Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 3HL
11	Preston West	Ainsdale Drive, Preston, PR2 1T
12	Riverbank	Brieryfield Road, Preston, PR1 8SR
13	Bamber Bridge	131 Brindle Road, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 6YJ
14	Duke Street	Duke Street, Chorley, PR7 3DU
15	Great Harwood	Rushton Street, Great Harwood, Blackburn, BB6 7JQ
16	Haslingden	Bury Road, Haslingden, Rossendale, BB4 5PG
17	Tay Street	21 Tay Street, Burnley, BB11 4BU
18	The Chai	Hurtley St, Burnley BB10 1BY
19	Colne	Walton Street, Colne, BB8 0EL



Best Start Family Hubs & YouthZone

21	Lytham St Annes	Sydney Street, Lytham St. Annes, FY8 1TR
22	West Paddock	West Paddock, Leyland, PR25 1HR
23	Clitheroe	Wesleyan Row, Parson Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 2JY
24	Maden	Rochdale Road, Bacup, OL13 9NZ

Best Start Network – Family Centres

35	Carnforth	Kellet Road, Carnforth, LA5 9LS
36	Westgate	Langridge Way, Morecambe, LA4 4XF
37	Weeton Camp	Weeton Army Camp, Singleton Road, PR4 3JQ
38	Stoneygate	Lennox Street, Preston, PR1 3XU
39	Preston East	Watling Street Road, Ribbleton, Preston, PR2 6TU
40	Kingsfold	Martinfield Road, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 9HJ
41	Wade Hall	75 Royal Avenue, Leyland, PR25 1BX
42	Skelmersdale Park	Yeadon Skelmersdale WN8 6NL
43	Rishton	7 Station Road, Rishton, BB1 4HF
44	Ightenhill	Oak Street, Burnley, BB12 6QZ
45	Whitegate	Victoria Rd, Padiham, Burnley BB12 8TG
46	Gisburn Road	Gisburn Road, Barnoldswick, Lancashire, BB18 5LS
47	Whitworth	Lloyd Street, Whitworth, Rochdale, OL12 8AA

Family Hubs and YouthZone

25	Morecambe Central	Central Drive, Morecambe, LA4 5DL
26	Kirkham	Chapel Walks, Kirkham, PR4 2TA
27	Moor Nook	Burholme Road, Ribbleton, Preston, PR2 6HN
28	Skelmersdale	Yeadon Skelmersdale WN8 6NL
29	Burscough	Station Approach, Burscough, Ormskirk, L40 0RZ
30	New Era	New Era Complex, Paradise Street, Accrington, BB5 1PB
31	Longridge	Berry Lane, Longridge, Preston, PR3 3JP
32	Rawtenstall	Old Fire Station, Burnley Road, Rawtenstall, BB4 8EW
33	Burnley Central	Mount Pleasant Street, Burnley, BB11 1LW

Youth Zones

48	White Cross	Quarry Rd, Lancaster LA1 3SE
49	Garstang	45 Windsor Rd, Garstang, Preston PR3 1EX
50	Lord Street	Lord Street, Chorley, PR7 5TR
51	Barnoldswick	Station Rd, Barnoldswick BB18 5NA



Supporting children, young people and families to succeed in Lancashire

