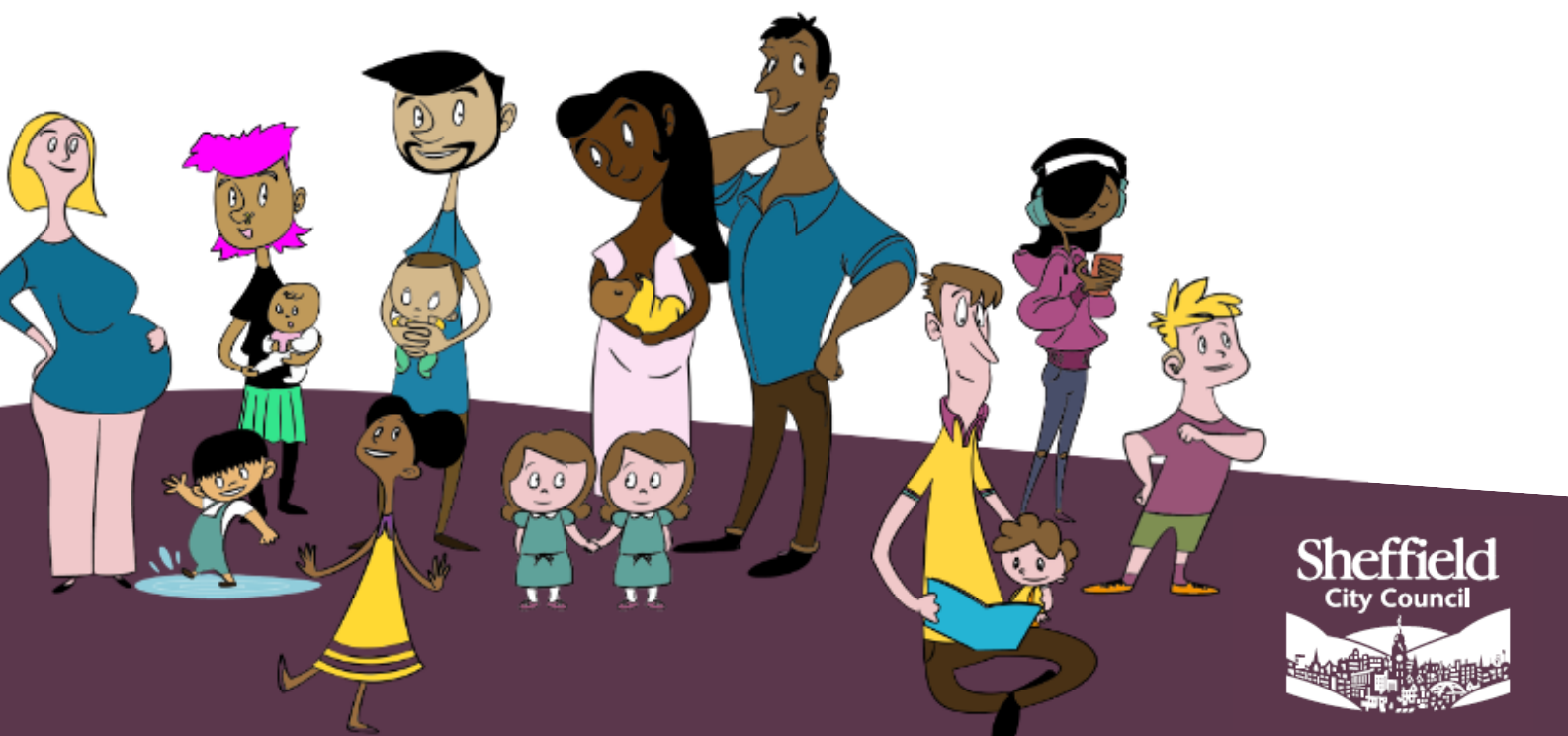


Start for Life, Sheffield: Early Years Strategy 2023-28

Easy Read



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Summary



This document is the easy read version of Sheffield's Early Years Strategy.

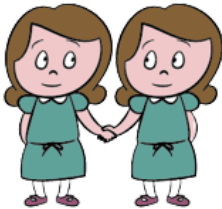
A **strategy** is a plan of things to be done.



This Strategy sets out how we can work together to give children the best start in life.



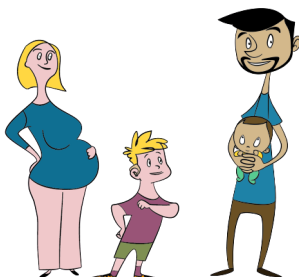
This strategy has been made by talking with parents, carers and people who work in health, education and care.



All children should be healthy, happy and safe.

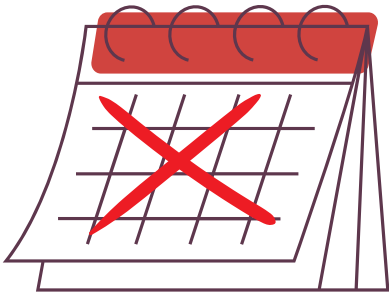


We want all families to have the right support at the right time.

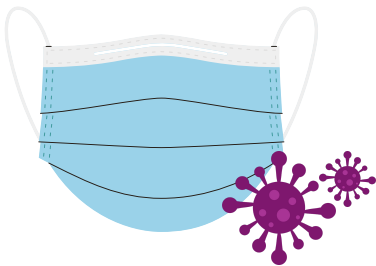


The new Family Hubs and Start for Life offer will help to make support for families better in Sheffield.

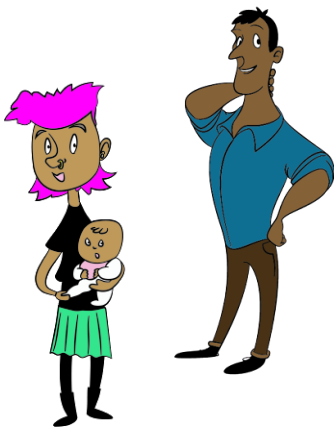
Why do we need an early years strategy?



The old strategy ended in 2023. That strategy was called “Great Start in Life”.



The Corona Virus has changed things or made some things harder for some people.



There are lots of new things happening in the Early Years, for example:

- family hubs and the start for life offer
- a new infant mental health pathway



There are other strategies and work happening which want to help children and their families.

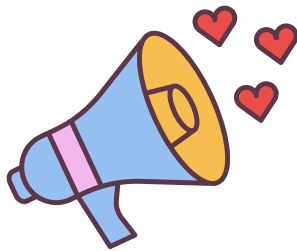
About the strategy



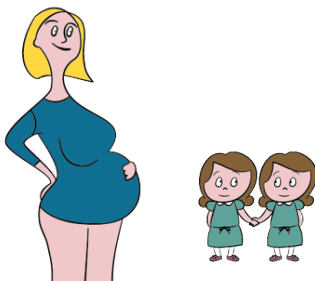
We want to make sure that all children have the best start to their life.



We want all children to be happy and healthy.



The strategy will help people to understand why the early years are important.



The strategy is for children and their families, from pregnancy up to 5 years of age.



Getting a good start in life and getting the most from education are important for good health and wellbeing later in life.



The strategy will be monitored by the family hubs and start for life programme board.



There are 32,212 children under the age of 5.



1 in 4 children under 5 years old are disadvantaged in Sheffield.

Disadvantaged means it can be harder to do the same things as other children.



1 in 4 children are from black or minority ethnic communities.

Minority ethnic or **ethnic minority** people are people who live in places where most of the other people are a different race.



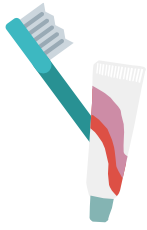
Around 1 in every 100 births are to a mother that is under the age of 18.

Teenage mothers are more likely to have babies that are:

- born before their due date
- weigh less
- have more health and development problems as they get older.



In 2021, 68 babies out of every 100 had breast milk as their first feed.



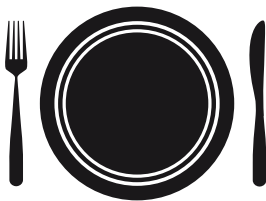
Each year around 340 children aged 0-5 are taken to hospital because of tooth decay.



There are 1,715 2 year olds in funded early education.



Most 3 & 4 year olds go to funded early education that is rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding.



Sheffield has a high number of nursery and primary children who have Free School Meals.



40 in every 100 children in Year 6 are overweight or obese in Sheffield (2022).

Obese means a person has a lot of extra fat.



A baby born in Sheffield today would live on average to 78.6 years if they are a boy or to 82.4 years if they are a girl.

This is less than the national average.



Over 1 in 4 children live in poverty.

Poverty means you are poor and not able to buy the things you need.



There were more families who were homeless in 2020/2021 than the year before.

Children who are homeless are more likely to have poor mental health and social skills than other people who have a house.



The cost of food and drink increased by 17.4% in the year up to June 2023.



6,509 children were referred to children's social care in Sheffield in 2022. This is 1075 more than in 2021.

Referred to social care means when someone contacts children's services because they are worried about a child.



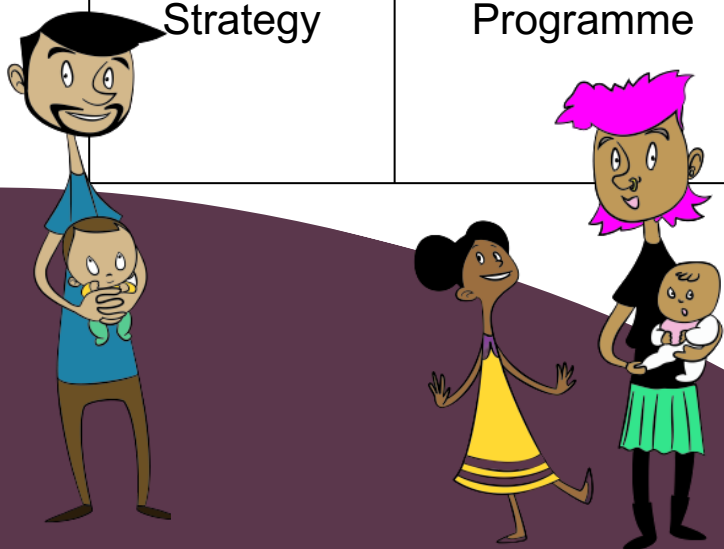
Sheffield currently has 656 Looked After Children, this is less than in 2022 and 2021.

Looked after children are cared for by the local authority rather than their parents.

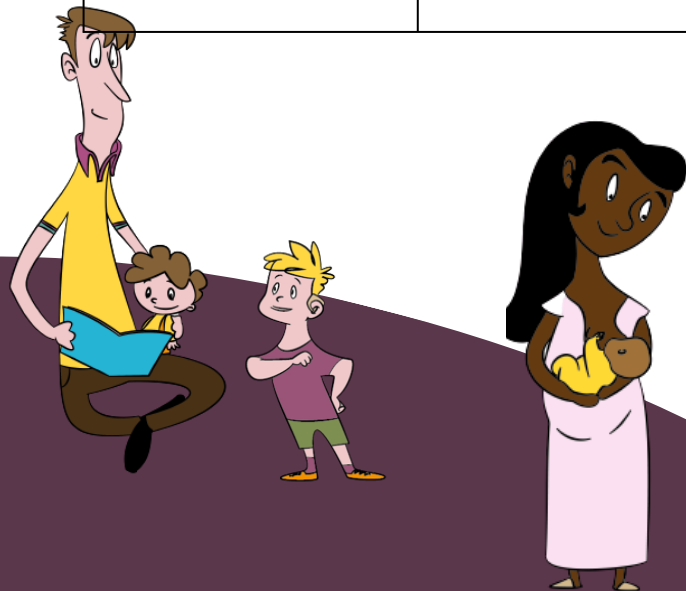
National and local context

There are lots of strategies, plans and pieces of work that support the work of this early years strategy. Some of them are below:

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)	Early Years SEND Developments	Sheffield Delivery Plan 22/23	Sheffield's Childrens Early Help Review
Family Hubs and the Start for Life Offer (2022)	Tackling Inequalities in Early Childhood	Sheffield Tackling Poverty Framework 2020 - 2030	Sheffield's Health and Care Partnership (HCP)
Children's Early Help Strategy	Maternal Cultural Safety Developments	Pre-Birth Pathway	Early Years Strategic Plan
Oral Health Strategy	Healthy Child Programme	Sheffield Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy	The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days



The Food Strategy	Speech and Language Review	Infant Mortality Strategy	Sheffield City Council Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2023
Sheffield Parenting Hub	Maternity Health and Wellbeing	The Sheffield HCP Children and Young People's Wellbeing Delivery Group	Sheffield's Early Years School Readiness Ambitions (2022 Review)
Tobacco Control Strategy	The new Infant Mental Health Pathway Development (Ongoing from April 2022)	Inclusion Strategy	Early Years: a crisis in affordability and sustainability



Sheffield's early years system



In this strategy we talk about an early years system.



By **system** we mean parents, children, and everyone who works with children under 5 years old and their family.



Parents and children are the most important part of this system.



The way we help parents can make a difference on the life chances of our children.

Life chances mean the things a child can do or achieve when they grow up.

Sheffield's early years system



We want to use this strategy to describe the ways that everyone can work together to help families more.



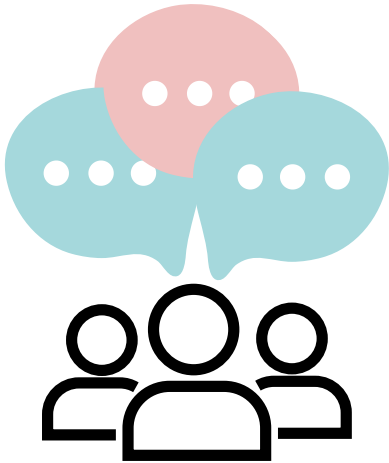
Sheffield City Council has a duty to make sure that parts of the early years system work well.

A **duty** is something you must do.

Some of these duties include:

- making sure there are enough child care places for children
- give advice and support to families
- having family hubs that people can go to
- keep children safe
- help those children with special educational needs and disabilities

What do people tell us about the early years system?



To know more about the early years system we held a consultation over 6 months.

A **consultation** is when you talk to different people and ask them what they think.



The consultation started in October 2022 at the early years event.



96 people who work with children came to that event and told us what they thought.



After the event we asked parents carers professionals and people who work in communities what they thought about the early years system.

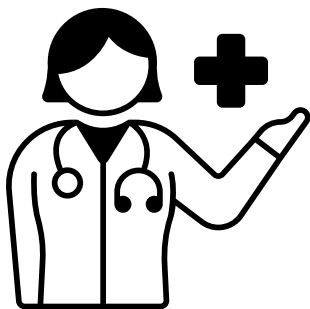
What do people tell us about the early years system?



We asked parents and carers about who they get advice from if they need help with their children.



3 out of 4 people said they would ask family and friends.



More than half of people said they would ask their doctor or health visitor.



1 in 4 parents or carers said they would ask the school or nursery.



1 in 4 parents or carers said they would ask on social media.

What do people tell us about the early years system?



Early years professionals shared their opinions on what was important to them. Some of the things they said were:



Funding for funded early learning was too low.



Being inclusive for fathers, young parents, working parents and parents who speak a different language is important.

Inclusive in this context means making sure everyone feels welcome and is valued in the early years.



Consider the needs of diverse communities more.

Diverse communities have people from different ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, religion, disability and sexual orientation.



The waiting lists for special educational needs services is too long.



There needs to be more funding for the early years.

Our ambitions

We have used the data and consultation to help create our ambitions.

An **ambition** is something we want to achieve.

We have 5 ambitions in this strategy.



Ambition 1

Children and their families achieve their best.

The early years system understands the needs of Sheffield Families and helps by working together.



Ambition 2

We will work together to meet the government's promise of 30 hours free childcare per week.

This is for working parents with children aged 9 months to 3 years.



Ambition 3

We reduce inequality, poverty and disadvantage. We help parents and families to be healthy.

Inequality means something that is unfair.

Ambition 4



We will support families who have children with special education needs and disabilities or complex health needs. We will support them at the earliest point and help them throughout their early life.

Complex health is when people need lots of support every day.



Ambition 5

Parents are supported to give the best start in life for their children

The success in reaching our ambitions depends on the progress of other strategies and plans that we listed on page 9.

Shared values and principles

Values are the things that people think are important for how they live or work.

Principles are ideas or beliefs that help to guide how people do things.

The values and principles below were agreed by people working with children and families:



- Children and families will be at the centre of what we do.
- We will listen to children and families to help make services better.
- We will work with the whole family when we can.
- We offer high quality advice and information to empower families.

Empower means being more confident to do the right thing.



- Children, young people and families can find the right information to help them make choices.
- We will help early in the child's life and when problems happen.



- We deliver services to children, young people and families in their communities.
- We will work together and develop services that are more integrated.

Integrated in this sentence means that different services work well together.

- We will focus on outcomes and provide value for money.



Outcomes are the things that happen because of something else.

Value for money means using money in the best way.



- We will reduce the number of professionals' families have to tell their story to.
- We will use data to make services better.
- We are committed to sharing information with partners to improve services for children.

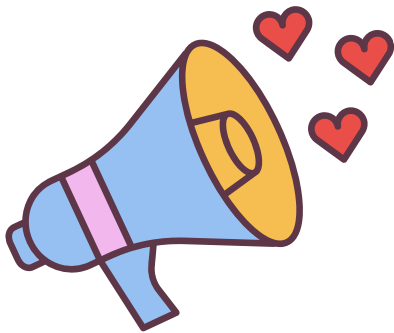
Committed means we want to do it.

What will success look like?

This strategy has been created to bring together the aims and ambitions of other strategies in the city.

Because of this, we will not make another action plan but we will use those other strategies to help the priorities and aims of this strategy.

By 2028 we would like to see:



- people promoting how important it is to have good quality early years services.

Promoting means making sure people know about something.



- we make plans to support families who need help from before a baby is born.



- services will work together in more ways to support families.



- families who have children with:
 - health needs
 - special educational needs or disabilities
 - protected characteristics

benefit from services working together

Protected characteristics are things like your age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or if you have a disability.



- that Sheffield has enough nursery and childcare places for children with funded early learning to attend.
- there are activities that support the cost of living crisis.
- parents feel a part of the development of services for early years.
- parents feel like they can access the services they need.
- improvements in health and education outcomes especially in those areas that are more deprived.



Deprived means not having enough money or food.

Governance

The **governance** is how the strategy will be managed.

This strategy will be managed by the Family Hubs programme board.

Information will be given to the Early Help Partnership Board and the Children and Young Peoples Delivery Group every 3 months.

Once a year we will give an update report to other groups like the Early Years Provider Network and the Inclusion Task Force.

We will continue to talk to parents and carers as part of the on-going monitoring of the strategy.

Monitoring means regularly checking the progress of something.

