

Infants, children and families to benefit from boost in support

Thousands of babies, children and families will benefit from a multi-million-pound package which will improve access to support, advice and services from birth through to adulthood.

Ensuring every child is properly supported throughout their life is vital for helping them thrive in future. The government is today (Saturday 2 April) announcing wide-ranging support across its flagship family programmes for those who need extra help to fulfil their potential, levelling up opportunities for children across the country.

To support parents, 75 local authorities have been announced as eligible for a share of £302 million to create new Family Hubs in their areas. These hubs give parents advice on how to take care of their child and make sure they are safe and healthy – providing services including parenting and breastfeeding support.

To further support children in their early years, £100 million of this funding will be shared among eligible areas to roll out bespoke parent-infant relationship and perinatal mental health support. Early intervention helps to improve children's mental health and life outcomes, which is why this investment is an important step to better support the first few years of a child's life.

A safe and stable home life is also vital for children's future life chances, so the government is increasing its support for families who face multiple disadvantages and may need extra help to overcome the challenges they face.

Through its [Supporting Families](#) programme, 300,000 of the most vulnerable families will receive help from a dedicated keyworker who will offer practical assistance, such as hands-on parenting support – backed by £700 million. Among those who have been supported by the programme, young people are 38% less likely to end up in prison and 32% less likely to end up in care.

For those children who do grow up in care, and often face multiple challenges without the family support network that others take for granted, the government will provide extra help as they leave the care system and transition to independence. Backed by £172 million, care leavers will be able to access practical advice on housing, finance and employment.

These announcements come just ahead of the Easter holidays, when hundreds of thousands of children from low-income families will also benefit from the government's [Holiday Activities and Food programme](#) which provides them with a healthy meal and an enriching activity to help them thrive.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

If we are to level up outcomes for children facing the biggest challenges, this needs to start at home. Being part of a stable, loving family gives a child an early advantage, which is why we are investing so significantly in helping every family to access the vital services that help them and their children thrive.

Evidence shows that some of the most disadvantaged families don't access vital services. Family Hubs offer localised early help and intervention, from early years support to parenting classes, all of which can make a transformative difference in the lives of parents and carers who may not have a support network.

We also have a responsibility to protect young people leaving care, to play our role fully as their corporate parent when their birth parents are unable. This funding will provide them with personal support and guidance as they embark on adult life and contribute fully to their own communities.

New research published this week shows that last summer (2021) alone, almost three-quarters of a million children benefitted from fun activities and healthy food through the HAF programme. Of these, 616,000 children took up a free, government-funded place, for those who are either eligible for free school meals or considered by the local authority to be in need of this provision. Clubs around the country targeted disadvantaged young people to benefit their health and wellbeing, and 70 per cent of those surveyed had never before been to this kind of free summer holiday provision.

An additional £3.2 million in 2022-23 will help councils to prevent care leavers from sleeping rough as part of the Government's manifesto commitment to eradicate rough sleeping by the end of parliament. The funding will allow councils to appoint specialist homelessness prevention advisers to provide intensive support to care leavers at highest risk of rough sleeping, as well as homeless prevention coordinators to improve the range and quality of accommodation options available to care leavers.

Minister for Levelling Up Communities, Kemi Badenoch said:

Stable and secure families are the bedrock of society. We want vulnerable families to get the right support at the right time to stop problems from escalating.

We've seen the significant impact the Supporting Families programme has had on families right across the country over the past decade and with the additional funding we're providing, even more vulnerable families will be able to get the help they need.

This is in line with the work set out in our Inclusive Britain strategy, which will help create a country where a person's race, social or ethnic background is no barrier to achieving their ambitions.

Today's announcement follows a package of major reforms to education, health and care announced earlier this week, through the Schools White Paper and the Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision. Taken together, these aim to transform the future of education so that every child, no matter their background, gets an excellent education.

Minister for Health, Maria Caulfield said:

The 1,001 critical days from pregnancy to the age of two are crucial for development and impact a child's health for the rest of their life.

I'm committed to ensuring every child has the best start in life to enable them to reach their full potential – that's why we're Building Back Fairer and ensuring 75 local authorities with disproportionately poor health and educational outcomes will be eligible for additional funding to support families earlier and offer specialised help locally.

Everyone should have a solid foundation on which to build their health and we are determined to tackle health disparities by levelling up the opportunities for children, no matter their background or where they grow up.

Government Advisor and Chair of the Early Years Review, Dame Andrea Leadsom said:

It is during the 1001 critical days from conception to age two that the building blocks for lifelong emotional and physical health are laid down. Providing joined up support for every parent and carer will be truly transformational in helping every baby get the best start for life.

Andrea King, Director of Clinical Division, Anna Freud Centre said:

We warmly welcome the additional investment from the Government into the continuing implementation of family hubs across England. It will provide much needed funds to support local children's services leaders to collaborate and co-design support for some of our most vulnerable children and families, through the delivery of family hubs.

By working within communities and alongside children's services, family hubs are able to deliver early intervention and support services when the need arises. This funding will provide thousands of children and young people with more opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The measures set out today demonstrate work across government to make sure families get the best start in life, ahead of the recommendations due this spring from the [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#).

Funding for young people leaving social care will see several targeted support programmes continue for the next three years. These include:

- **£99.8 million for Staying Put** Funding for local authorities will help care leavers stay with their foster families after they turn 18, potentially through to their 21st birthday. It means care leavers can continue to benefit from a stable and secure family setting, and prepare for independence at a more gradual pace, allowing them to lean on the supportive, nurturing family network.
- **£36 million for the Staying Close programme** More care leavers will be supported to live near their former children's home with support from a trusted adult – providing stability and a safety net into adulthood.
- **£36.4 million for Personal Advisors** These advisors support care leavers up to age 25, helping them navigate services such as housing, health or benefits and providing practical or emotional support to help them prepare for the challenges of living independently.

The Family Hubs and Start for Life programme is jointly overseen by the Department for Health and Social Care and the Department of Education. Announcing the eligible 75 LAs is only the first step in delivering the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme. We will work with the eligible LAs on the detailed programme requirements and will provide further detail to the sector in due course.

The £302 million for the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme includes:

- £100 million for bespoke parent-infant relationship and perinatal mental health support,
- £82 million to create a network of Family Hubs, improving access to a wide range of integrated support services for families with children aged 0-19,
- £50 million to establish breastfeeding support services,
- £50 million to fund evidence-based parenting programmes,
- £10 million to support local authorities to publish a clear 'Start for Life offer,' and

- A further £10 million to trial innovative start for life workforce models.

The package also includes £10 million to enable five local authorities to trial and evaluate innovative workforce models, investing in developing the modern, skilled workforce that we need to support babies and families.

The 75 local authorities (LAs) eligible for Family Hubs will be contacted and provided with further details on next steps.

They include: Barking and Dagenham, Barnsley, Bedford Borough, Birmingham, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Bradford, Brent, Bristol, Calderdale, Camden, Cornwall, Coventry, Croydon, Derby, Doncaster, Dudley, Durham, East Sussex, Enfield, Gateshead, Greenwich, Hackney, Halton, Haringey, Hartlepool, Hounslow, Isle of Wight, Islington, Kent, Kingston Upon Hull, Knowsley, Lambeth, Leicester, Lewisham, Lincolnshire, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Medway, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, Newham, Norfolk, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Nottingham, Oldham, Peterborough, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Redcar and Cleveland, Rochdale, Rotherham, Salford, Sandwell, Sheffield, South Tyneside, Southampton, Southwark, St. Helens, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland, Tameside, Telford and Wrekin, Thurrock, Torbay, Tower Hamlets, Wakefield, Walsall, Waltham Forest, and Wolverhampton.

The [Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project](#) is part of the government's commitment to champion family hubs. The Department is seeking to recruit up to six LAs to partner with them to support Beta testing and implementation of the information-sharing digital solutions.

An annual report of the [Supporting Families programme 2021-2022](#) includes an update on the programme's performance and a summary of the latest research findings.

There is also a suite of updated programme guidance for local authorities and their partners. These set out our refreshed expectations on what we want to achieve for families and provide the tools to deliver an early help system that is seamless, responsive, and offers co-ordinated preventative support.

Between 2012-2015, the Troubled Families Programme supported almost 120,000 families to improve their lives. The eligibility criteria and delivery model was updated in 2015 and since then the programme has supported over 470,000 families to build brighter futures. However, due to these changes, these outcome figures are not directly comparable.

Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Colombia: Mr George Hodgson

Press release

Mr George Hodgson has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia, in succession to Mr Colin Martin-Reynolds CMG.



Mr George Hodgson has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia, in succession to Mr Colin Martin-Reynolds CMG who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Hodgson will take up his appointment during September 2022.

Full name: George Wilson Hodgson

Married to: Constance Hodgson

Children: Three

Dates	Role
2021	Full Time Language Training (Spanish)
2019 – 2021	FCDO, Assistant Director and Head of North Africa Department, Middle East and North Africa Directorate
2020	FCDO, Deputy Director, then Director, Covid-19 Taskforce
2015 – 2019	Dakar, Her Majesty's Ambassador, accredited to Senegal, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau
2014 – 2015	FCO, Head of Ebola Taskforce
2012 – 2014	FCO, Head of Parliamentary and Communications Department, Europe Directorate
2011 – 2012	US Department of State, Senior Adviser, Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
2010 – 2011	Kabul, Political Counsellor
2008 – 2010	Islamabad, First Secretary
2006 – 2008	Princeton University, Masters in Public Affairs (Special Unpaid Leave)

Dates	Role
2005 – 2006	Brussels, United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the European Union, Second Secretary
2004	Kabul, Second Secretary
2002 – 2003	FCO, Desk Officer, Enlargement & Wider Europe Team

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[New guidance sets out how to live safely with COVID-19](#)

As set out in the government's [Living with COVID-19 plan](#), the focus of this new phase is on protecting those who are most at risk from the virus.

A new set of guidance from UKHSA provides important public health advice for people with symptoms of respiratory infections, such as COVID-19; people with a positive COVID-19 test and their contacts; and advice on safer behaviours for everyone. UKHSA has also published a set of public health principles for businesses, organisations and employers to consider in managing the risk to their workforce from respiratory infections, such as COVID-19.

Dame Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of UKHSA, said:

As we learn to live with COVID, we encourage people to keep following simple steps to help keep themselves and others safe.

The pandemic is not over and how the virus will develop over time remains uncertain. COVID still poses a real risk to many of us, particularly with high case rates and hospitalisations. That is why it is sensible to wear a mask in crowded, enclosed spaces, keep indoor spaces ventilated and stay away from others if you have any symptoms of a respiratory illness.

Vaccination remains the best way to protect us all from severe disease and hospitalisation. If you have not yet come forward for your primary or booster I would urge you to do so straight away – the NHS vaccine programme is there to help and the sooner you are vaccinated the sooner you and your family and friends will be protected.

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection

UKHSA guidance sets out that people with symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and who have a high temperature or do not feel well, should

try to stay at home and avoid contact with others. Those who are asked – or choose to test – and get a positive COVID-19 result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days following the day of their positive result.

There is some evidence that children have a shorter duration of illness compared to adults. Children and young people who are asymptomatic, choose to take a COVID-19 test and receive a positive test result are advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day of the test.

There will be some [symptomatic testing available](#) for certain high-risk groups and settings, including for those who are at highest risk of becoming seriously unwell and who are eligible for COVID-19 monoclonal antibody and antiviral treatments.

The guidance states that it is particularly important that a person with symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, avoids close contact with people whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness. If a person has tested positive for COVID-19 they should avoid those people who are at higher risk of serious illness for a 10-day period.

Anyone who needs to leave their home whilst they have symptoms of a respiratory infection such as COVID-19, or within 5 days following the day of their positive test, should take important precautions to minimise the chance of passing on their infection. Such precautions could include:

- wearing a well-fitting face covering or a face mask
- avoiding crowded or enclosed spaces such as public transport, large social gatherings and enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces
- exercising outdoors and away from others
- always remembering good hand and respiratory hygiene

Reducing the risks of spreading infection

Guidance also sets out actions for reducing the risks of spreading infection within the home, where someone has tested positive, or has symptoms of infection, and provides advice for those living in the home who will be close contacts. This is to help reduce the risk of them passing on infection.

For the wider population who don't have symptoms of COVID-19, or other respiratory infection or a positive COVID-19 test, UKHSA advises some important and sensible public health behaviours that can help to reduce the spread of infections and protect those around them. These include getting vaccinated, ventilating indoor spaces, wearing a face covering or mask in

certain situations and keeping up good hand and respiratory hygiene – such as covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. Recent evidence on the [effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines against Omicron](#) and [wearing face coverings](#) has previously been published by UKHSA.

Updated UKHSA guidance is available online

[Guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19.](#)

[Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19.](#)

[Public health principles for reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, in the workplace.](#)

FCD0 statement on UN-brokered truce in Yemen

News story

The UK welcomes the United Nation’s two-month truce announcement on Yemen.



An FCD0 spokesperson said:

The United Kingdom welcomes the announcement by the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, of a two-month truce in Yemen. This follows positive steps by all parties, including separate ceasefire initiatives by the Saudi-led Coalition and the Houthis. After seven long years of conflict, this truce represents the best chance to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of Yemenis and improve regional stability.

The UK also welcomes the recent political consultations led by the

UN Special Envoy, and the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative for intra-Yemeni dialogue. There is no military solution to the war in Yemen. An inclusive political dialogue is the only route to a sustainable resolution.

Attention should now focus on building further confidence through measures including the re-opening of the Taiz road, and the regular flow of fuel deliveries, goods and flights. All parties must now seize this opportunity and work with UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg to make progress towards a political deal.

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[Minister for Africa statement on first aid delivery to Tigray since mid-December](#)

News story

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford has issued a statement following the first delivery of aid to the Tigray region of Ethiopia since mid-December.



Credit: World Food Programme

Commenting on the first delivery of aid reaching Tigray since mid-December, Minister for Africa Vicky Ford said:

The conflict in northern Ethiopia has caused immense harm and suffering to more than 9 million people since it began in November 2020. Millions of civilians have been forced to flee their homes

and more people are facing famine-like conditions in the region today than the rest of the world combined.

The arrival of today's humanitarian convoy in Tigrayan controlled areas, the first since mid-December, is a welcome development and comes at a critical point in this dreadful conflict. These aid trucks, more than a quarter of which are directly funded by the UK, will help to replenish severely depleted stocks of fuel and food. The deliveries should also pave the way for humanitarian agencies to resume the provision of further urgent aid to communities that have gone without support for far too long.

Since July last year there has been almost negligible access to Tigray. The violence has made accessing vulnerable people in Tigray complex and dangerous for humanitarian agencies. Relief workers have been killed, harassed and consistently obstructed. The UK commends their bravery and perseverance.

The UK also recognises the urgent needs of communities in Afar, many of whom have been forced to flee their homes due to the fighting. We acknowledge the important role the Afar authorities have played, alongside the Government of Ethiopia and the authorities in Tigray, in facilitating today's convoy and prioritising the welfare of civilians

Throughout this conflict, the UK has requested that all armed actors provide unfettered humanitarian access for aid agencies. We have called out abuses by all sides to the conflict and committed more than £75 million of aid to those affected in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions.

The UK is committed to working with all actors in northern Ethiopia to bring the conflict to a close and to promote long-term peace and development.

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