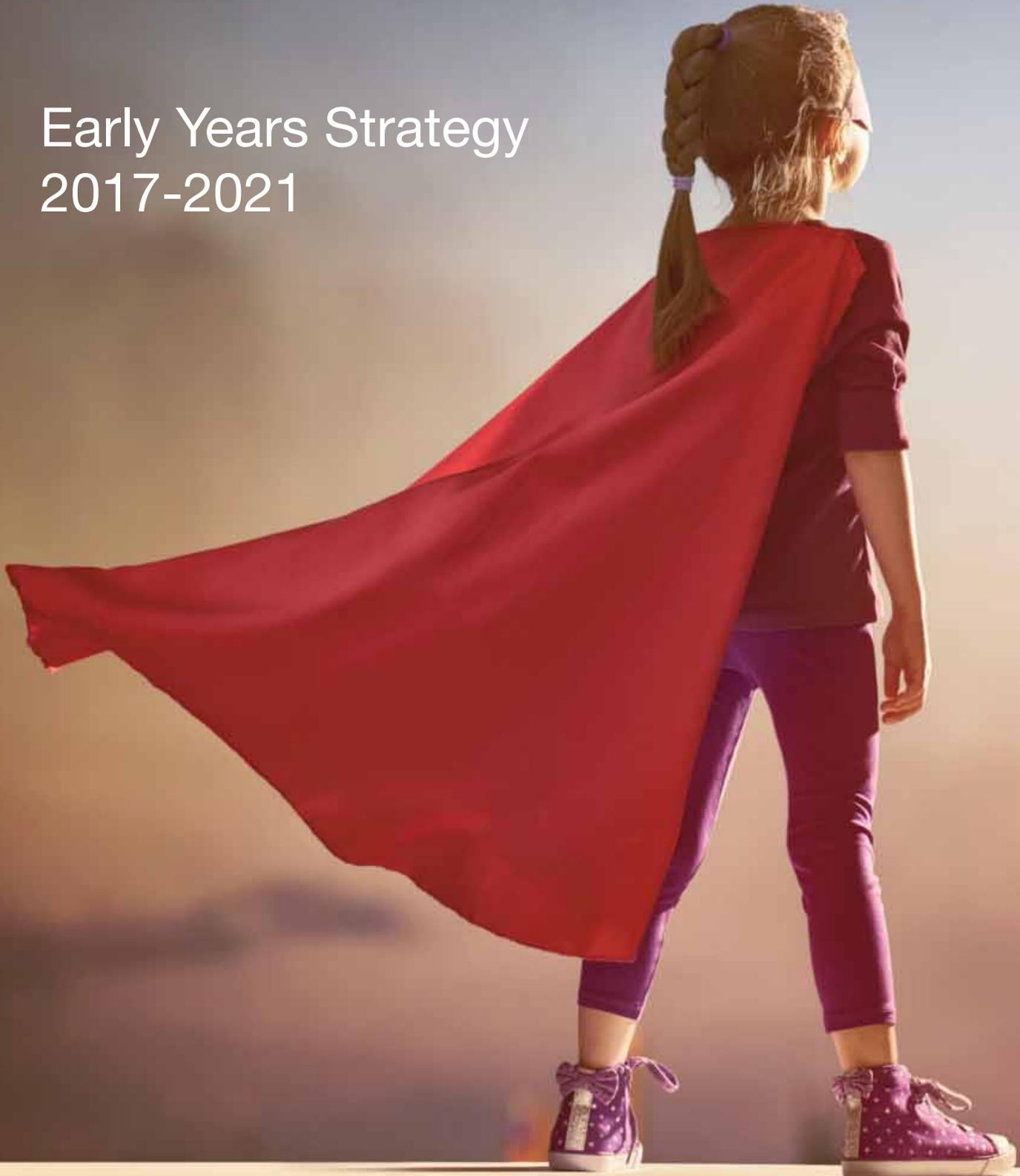
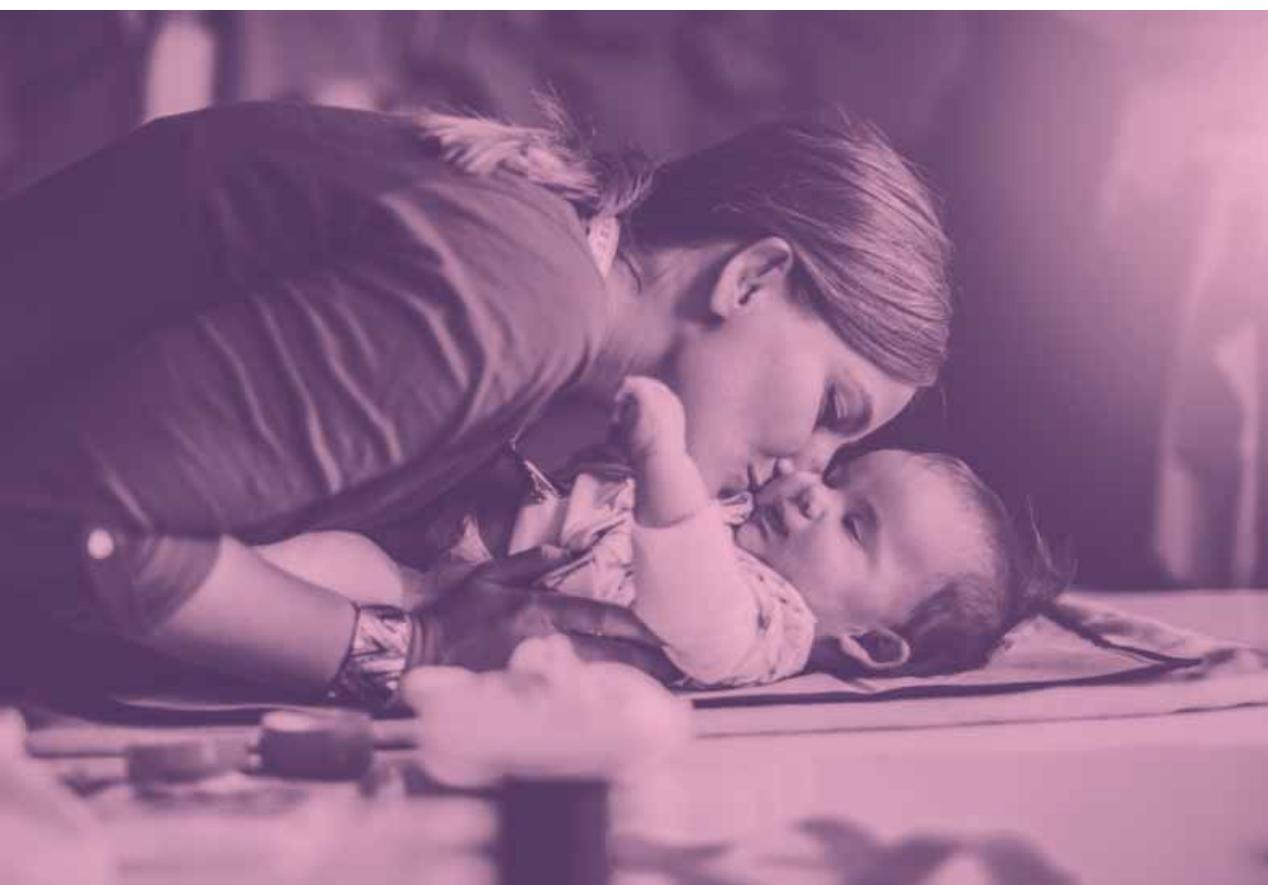


Early Years Strategy 2017-2021



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VISION

“ Working effectively together to make sure that every child in their early years has the opportunity to be the best they can be”



1

Introduction



From the point of conception through to the first day at school, parents, babies and young children have regular contact with a range of different services including midwifery, health visiting, GPs, children centres, childcare and early education provision.

Getting this contact and these services right in these critical years is crucial to ensure that parents are supported sufficiently and that all babies and children are given the best possible start in life.



An effective Early Years Strategy needs to be based on the assumption that parents are the first educator and ensure that there is a robust system in place to support them in this vital role.

Research shows social class, income, living conditions and parent's own education levels are directly related to child development outcomes. However, the quality of the early home learning environment (from birth) acts as a significant modifying factor. All parents can enhance their child's progress if they engage regularly in activities that encourage positive social development and thinking.

Children with strong early home learning environments are ahead in both social and cognitive development at the age of three. They show advanced language ability, higher levels of confidence, co-operation and sociability, and this advantage continues as they progress through school.

Services need to be focused on delivering an approach that is underpinned by the need for parents to develop good parenting skills. This will provide the basis for them to have an understanding of how a child learns and ensure that they are an active participant in their child's brain development, enabling the child to become an active learner with a strong attachment and healthy relationships.



Whilst parents must be recognised as the child's first educator, this strategy recognises the impact that access to high quality education can have in improving outcomes for children. Research shows us that access to high quality educational experiences can have a significant impact on the outcomes a child achieves. This strategy has a strong focus on accelerating children's learning within early year's settings and building upon the good and outstanding provision that exists within Wolverhampton.

For the purpose of this strategy school readiness is defined as:

“Children will be able to express their needs, feelings and wants. A school will ensure that children feel heard and understood by their practitioners. Children will be excited, enthused and demonstrate a willingness to learn both inside and outside of the classroom”.



2

Guiding principles

In Wolverhampton we know how important it is for children to be happy and confident, secure and safe, and able to achieve their full potential.

We want to ensure that all children living in Wolverhampton have an equal chance to have a really good start in life including supporting them to have a good level of development when they start school.



Wolverhampton is committed to:

- Putting the best interests of the child at the heart of decision making.
- Taking a holistic approach to the wellbeing of a child.
- Working with children, young people and their families on ways to improve wellbeing.
- Advocating preventative work and early intervention to support children, young people and their families.
- Believing professionals must work together in the best interests of the child.



We will:

- Work with families to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes, safely preventing family breakdown.
- Deliver a whole system approach, enabling close working with partners with clarity on roles and responsibilities.
- Build employee confidence and skills, and empower and support to work creatively and innovatively with families.
- Provide affordability and enable the financial sustainability of children's services in the future.

3

National context



It is now recognised that the earliest years of a child's life can have an important impact on his or her long-term development. These are formative years, physiologically, cognitively, socially and emotionally.

For a child to flourish and fulfil their potential, they need their environment to provide them with specific types of support from conception to the age of five. The parent or primary caregiver is the most important part of a child's environment, and attachment has long been recognised as a key factor in positive child development.

“Disadvantage is an unfavourable circumstance or condition that reduces the chances of success or effectiveness”

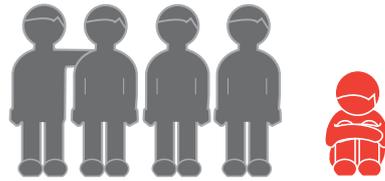
Oxford English Dictionary





Children not reaching expected level in language and communication skills

1:4



Children failing to reach expected level in personal, social and emotional development

1:5



 Across the UK, figures indicate that children from the poorest 30% of neighbourhoods are:
 

11 percentage points less likely than their peers to reach the expected level in communication and language...
 

-11






-9

...they are also **9 percentage points** less likely to reach the expected level in personal, social and emotional development.




Primary school pupils achieving a “good level of development”

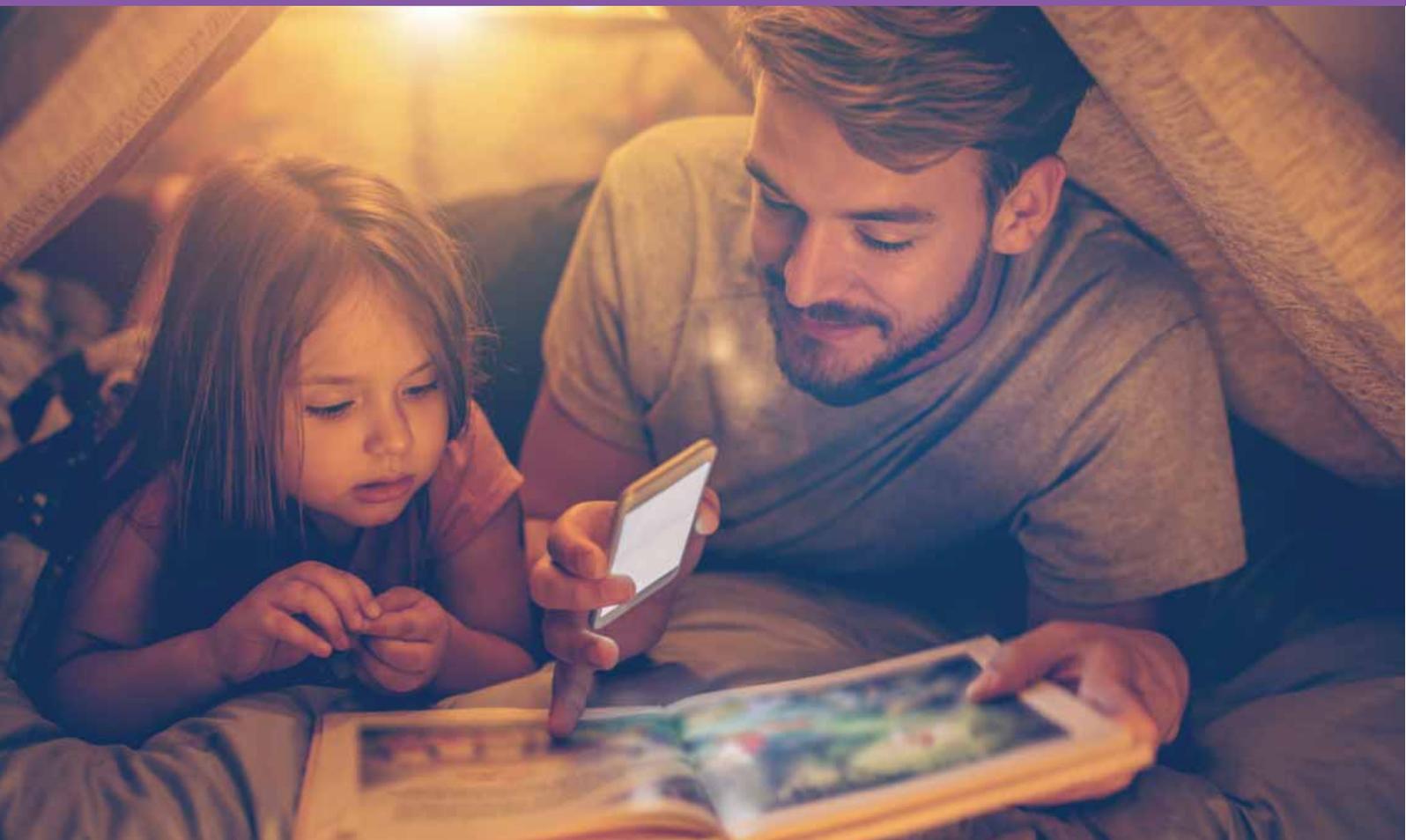


Pupils eligible for free school meals

Other pupils

The EYFS data also show 45 per cent of primary school pupils eligible for free school meals achieved a “good level of development” compared with 64 per cent of other pupils –

a 19 percentage point gap.



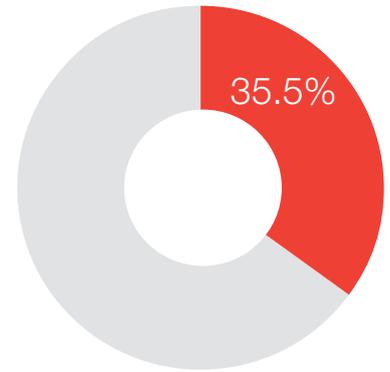
Research found that better childhood behaviour was associated with a number of improved outcomes in later life, including income and aspects of mental health and well-being.

Language development - one of the earliest areas of cognitive development and an important stepping-stone to future success - is also influenced by parents or caregivers. If adults talk with children effectively - taking the lead from the child, elaborating on what they say, asking questions, sharing rhymes or songs or books - then children are given the best start in developing the cognitive tools they need to succeed at school.

4

Local context

● Percentage of population who are from BME communities



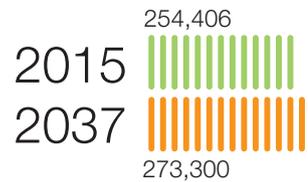
Wolverhampton has a population of 254,406 (mid-year 2015 estimate) and is proud of the diversity that this encompasses, with 35.5% of its residents from BME communities.

The population is predicted to grow by 8.9% by 2037, to 273,300, with the aged 19 or below cohort expected to increase by 7%.

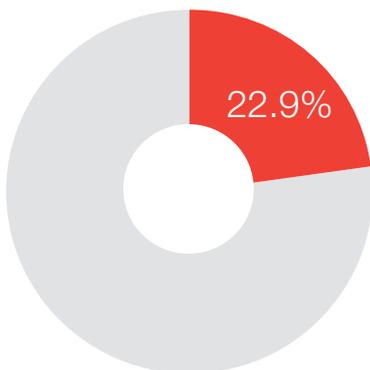
Indices of Deprivation 2010

RANKED NO. **20**

Predicted Population



● Percentage of population who are children (aged 0-17) living in Wolverhampton



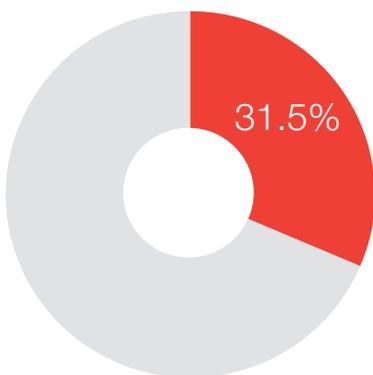
A total of 58,167 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Wolverhampton. This is approximately 22.9% of the total population in the area.

Life expectancy is lower than the England average and Wolverhampton ranks 20 out of 326 Local Authority areas in the Indices of Deprivation 2010.





● Children (aged 0-17) who are living in poverty within Wolverhampton



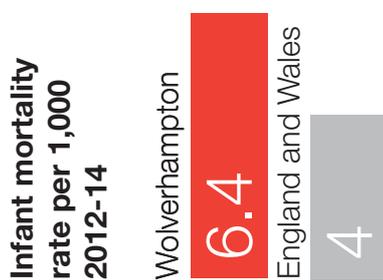
Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 41.6% of all children living in the area compared with 21.5% in England. Approximately 42.7% of children aged 5-17 are from a minority ethnic group compared with 24% in England. The largest minority ethnic group of children and young people in the area are Asian Indian (born in the UK).



Health

The foundations for virtually every aspect for human development - physical, intellectual and emotional - are established in early childhood. The Healthy Child Programme has highlighted the importance of giving every child the best start in life and reducing health inequalities throughout life.

The health and wellbeing of our children is paramount to securing good outcomes; unfortunately the health and wellbeing of children in Wolverhampton is worse than the England average.



Wolverhampton currently has an Infant Mortality rate of 6.4 per 1,000 (2012-14) compared to 4.0 per 1,000 for England and Wales.

Over the past 20 years there has been a 30% reduction in the average infant mortality rate for England and Wales, whereas in Wolverhampton the local infant mortality rate has largely remained static over this period. Despite a slight fall in the rate in 2012-14 Wolverhampton remains one of the Local Authorities with highest rates of infant mortality in England and Wales.



Analysis by Wolverhampton Public Health found that smoking during pregnancy was a key risk factor for infant deaths within the city with the risk of infant death increasing by 54% for those mothers who smoked.



In 2015/2016 the rate of obesity for children aged 4-5 years is **12.2%** (the national average in 2014/15 was 12.3%)



By Year 6, **40%** of young people in Wolverhampton are overweight or obese



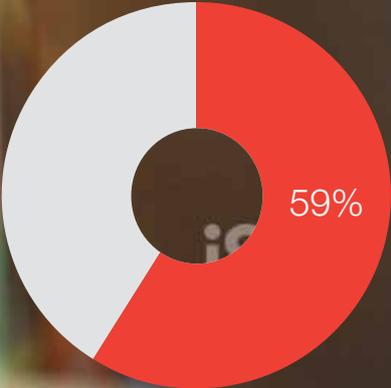
The current rate of under 18 conceptions age 15 to 17 years (2014) in Wolverhampton is **29.6 per 1,000** which is a 6% reduction in the previously reported rate of 31.5 per 1,000 (2013). Although the rate of under 18 conceptions has remained significantly higher than the England average (currently 22.8 per 1,000)



Infant feeding

Babies receiving breastmilk by six months of age





● Percentage of Primary and Secondary in Wolverhampton in the most deprived quintile nationally

Education

58 (59%) of the Primary and Secondary schools in Wolverhampton are in the most deprived quintile nationally as defined by Ofsted. There are no Wolverhampton schools classed as being in the least deprived category. 22% of all pupils are eligible for free school meals; for Primary schools (including reception) the figure is 20.5% (the national average is 14.5%) and in Secondary schools (including Academies) it is 19.7% (the national average is 13.2%).

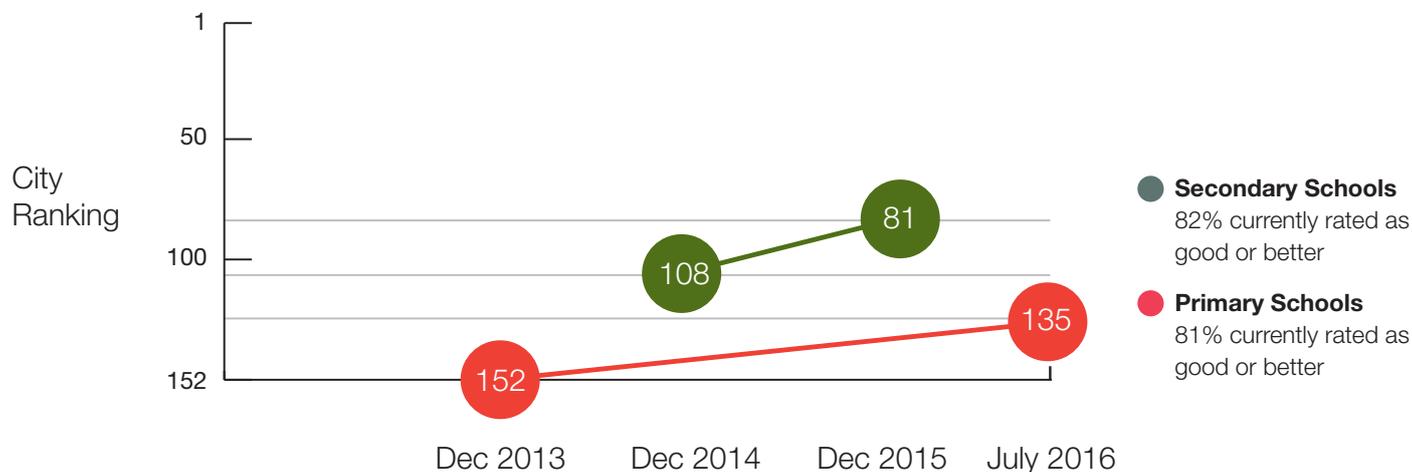


24% of pupils have English as an additional language



18% of pupils have Special Educational Needs against a national average of 15%

Ofsted outcomes: Wolverhampton



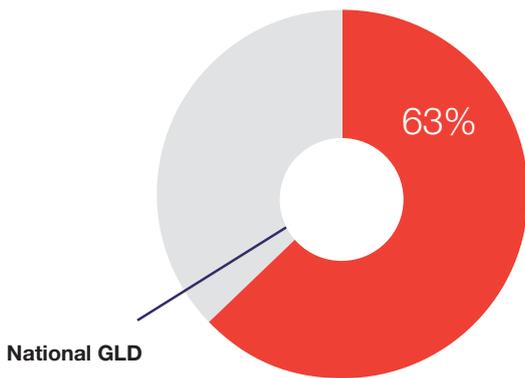
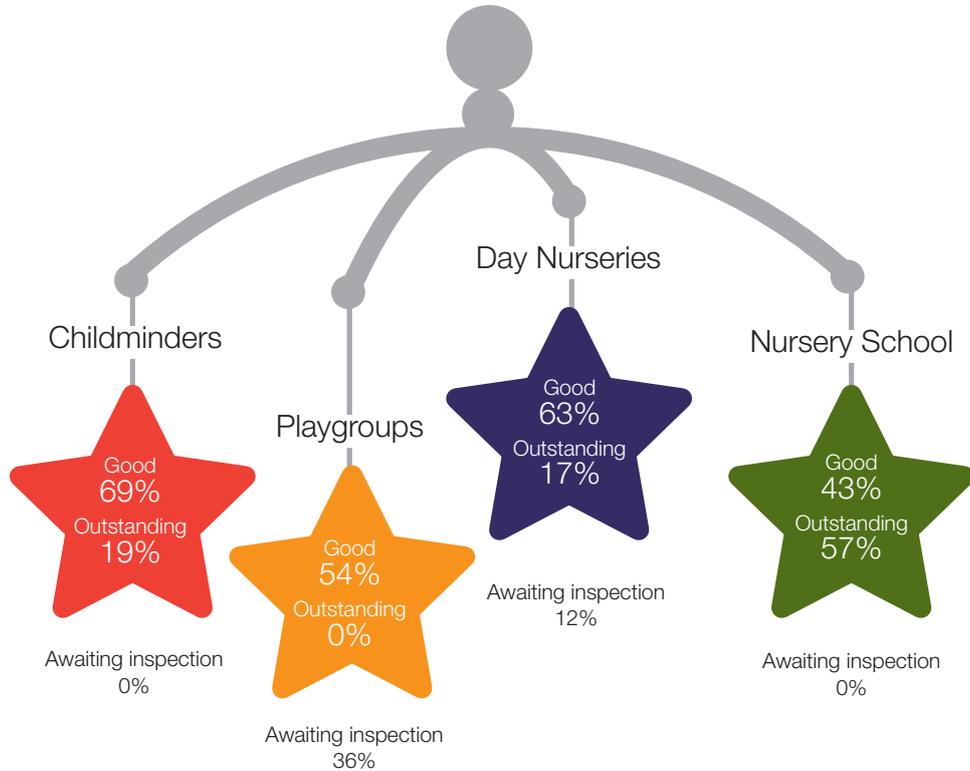
The city's schools have been on a rapid improvement journey over the last two years. Primary School Ofsted outcomes in December 2013 were the worst in the country when the Local Authority was rated 152nd out of 152 – the current rating is 135th and we are rapidly rising up the table – with 81% of Primary schools currently rated as good or better (July 2016). Secondary Schools have been on a similar journey with the Local Authority being rated as 108th in the country in December 2014 and in 2015 rated joint 81st, receiving the accolade of being in the top 20% of most improved authorities in the country, with only Solihull above Wolverhampton in the West Midlands.

The city has 83% of all schools currently rated as good or better (July 2016) with 82% of Secondary schools currently rated as good or better (July 2016).

The ambition is that by September 2018, 95% of schools in the city will be rated good or better when inspected.

The city continues through the work of the early help service, school improvement and standards team strive to ensure that schools, settings, childminders and all early year's providers are delivering high quality early years experiences. The Ofsted ratings for the city continue to rise annually; the figures for all providers within the city demonstrate this.

Ofsted Ratings - Wolverhampton Early Years Providers



However, the statutory assessment outcomes at the end of the key stage (early year's foundation stage profile EYFSP) do not reflect these judgements as although Wolverhampton's % of children achieving a good level of development (GLD) continues to rise annually; we do not meet the national % GLD. Provisional data for 2016 shows Wolverhampton achieved a GLD of 63%, a shortfall of 6% against the National figure of 69%.

● Percentage of children achieving a good level of development

September Offer

The September Offer is a commitment to offer, by the end of September, a suitable place in post-16 education or training to all young people in the year they reach compulsory education age.

Achievement 2015:



99.9% of the Year 11 received an offer. This was higher than the Black Country, the West Midlands and the England average

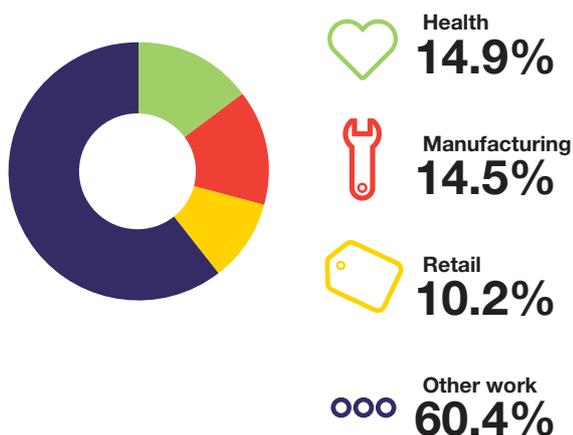


98.5% of Year 12 received an offer. This was higher than the Black Country, the West Midlands and the England average.

Employment

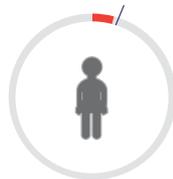
Wolverhampton is a city where economic growth and prosperity is a top priority for the council and its partners. In order to compete in the labour market and progress in the world of work, local people need the education, skills and determination to succeed. The statistics show that many local people struggle. Ensuring our children have the foundations to access future opportunities available to them is critical.

Where our residents work



Occupations

Wolverhampton has:



4.1% of young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 4.7% nationally.



19.4% of the adult resident population have no qualifications compared to 8.5% nationally (Annual Population Survey estimate).



15.2% of the resident population aged 16-24 have no qualifications compared to 7.8% nationally (Annual Population Survey estimate).



33.4% of the resident population aged 16-24 have GCSE grades A to C or equivalent compared to 21.1% nationally (Annual Population Survey estimate).



Full time equivalent gross median pay is **£434.20** the 17th worst out of 327 English local authorities. However part-time median pay fares better at £156.20, the 91st worst in the country. (Annual Survey of Household earnings HMRC estimate).

Benefits

Wolverhampton has:



The second highest claimant rate out of 327 district local authorities in England with 4.6% (1,380) of the resident population aged 16 to 24 claiming unemployment benefits

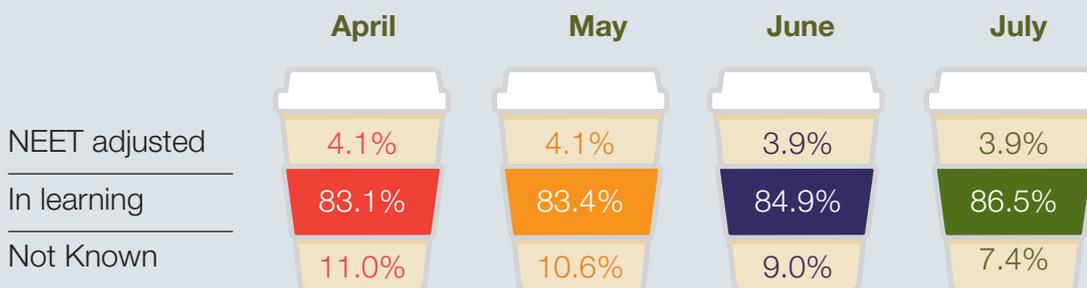


An unemployment claimant count rate of 4.2% that is double the national rate of 1.7% and the West Midlands rate of 2.3%.

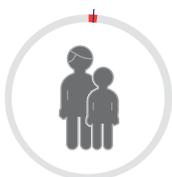


Over 1,360 people receiving Carers Allowance (0.53%) compared to 0.39% of people in the West Midlands.

Post 16 Participation rates for Wolverhampton April – July 2016



Lone Parents



Over 2,790 people in Wolverhampton are lone parents; 1.7% of the resident population aged 16 to 64 compared to 1.3% in the West Midlands and 1% nationally.



Over 28% of these lone parents on benefits are aged under 24 and over 97% of lone parents on benefits are female. (NB The removal of entitlement to the housing element of Universal Credit from young people aged 18-21, with some exceptions, from April 2017 has the potential to impact severely on Wolverhampton's young parents and their children).



Over half of lone parents have received benefits for more than two years.

5

Early intervention and prevention

For many years research has helped us understand that intervening early in the lives of young children can have a positive influence on their lives as they live and grow. Intervening early for those children and families who need it most makes a positive difference and the importance of the contribution that the Early Years service can make to this process cannot be underestimated. Yet intervention from services has historically often started at a higher level of need.

Wolverhampton aims to offer support at a much earlier stage, preventing the escalation of needs, wherever possible, and reducing the likelihood of problems emerging in the first place.

Early intervention services target the most vulnerable children and families who require additional and intensive support, focusing on improving outcomes. Services aim to improve the resilience and well-being for children and families and ensure they are able to access the right services at the right time in the right place. They also aim to make a significant difference in reducing demand for statutory services and to provide support to families who are stepping down from statutory services.

The Think Family approach helps to provide responses to the most vulnerable families and reduce inter-generational cycles of poor outcomes. The approach has far reaching implications which extends to both universal and targeted services who work with adults, young people, children and families and who work across all sectors.

Systems and services have recently been redesigned to ensure vulnerable children, young people and adults secure better outcomes, by co-ordinating the support they receive and the impact that services have.

Wolverhampton's approach is designed to be flexible enough to support all children and families whatever their need, whenever they need it. It aims to respond in a meaningful, supportive way, working with parents wherever possible. It takes into account that everyone involved with the family has an important part to play and puts the wellbeing of children and families at the heart of any support.

6

What will Early Years services look like for children, families and partners?

There is good practice happening across the city and families are supported well. However, more needs to be done not only in embedding this good practice but in constantly improving the outcomes for children and families.

In order to capture a child and family's journey and ensure the services we offer to them impacts on their outcomes, the Early Years Strategy has identified a number of key strategic priorities which have been grouped into the following four themes.



Good maternal health

This theme focuses on ensuring there is a consistent approach to the delivery of health services for families with a clear pathway from conception to age five, in line with the Healthy Child Programme outlining what families can expect from professional services. This will be achieved through good partnership working that ensures specialist services such as drug and alcohol and mental health services receive referrals at the earliest possible point, to help parents develop and sustain a strong bond with their child. The achievement of successful outcomes as a result of early intervention will support parents across the city.

Strengthening Families Hubs offer both universal and targeted support to families across the city. These are facilitated by a range of multi - agency professionals. Delivering universal services to every child and family provides an invaluable opportunity to identify children at risk of poor outcomes and provide early help to families. Research around early attachments tells us that promoting secure attachments and good maternal health are important for the emotional well-being and development of both mother and baby to secure the best start in life.

By offering a consistent and well planned approach to service delivery, families will be supported in developing secure attachments and identification of early needs. A clear pathway will ensure the ease of access to services such as early parenting classes, specialist health services (such as community based health services/professionals) and Strengthening Families Hubs.

Parents



Professionals



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will be engaged in health/ universal services at the earliest point and are clear about what is on offer across the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will launch a pathway that all professionals who support children and families in the early years will sign up to that offers a consistent message and ensures the best start in life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will participate in services so that their children have the opportunity to receive high quality health care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will provide services at the appropriate milestones to ensure children get the best start in life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will understand their child's development milestones and how they can support them through their parenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will provide antenatal classes that offer an attractive Early Parenting Programme to expectant parents and beyond including sessions focused on early attachment/bonding - Talk to your bump programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will identify and make available a suite of multi - agency services to support expectant/new mothers at the earliest point. Especially those who may present with early signs of low mood or historical mental health issues ✔ Will support parents access to services already on offer e.g. SWITCH Programme, Therapeutic Support, Befriending services – Home Start

CASE STUDY

family in need



A family struggling with drug and alcohol addiction were made the subject of a Child Protection plan due to concerns about the impact this would have on the health and wellbeing of their unborn child – particularly as abnormalities were detected with the baby's heart.

The Early Intervention team provided a package of support to the parents, including emotional support regarding their drug and alcohol use, support to access antenatal hospital appointments and universal groups, housing support and parenting skills work.

Weekly visits to the family were carried out by professionals from health, social care and the Families in Focus programme. The parents interacted well, developing a positive relationship

with social care professionals, and were open and honest about any drug and alcohol use.

Due to ongoing concerns about this, the baby was removed from his parents at birth and placed in to foster care. They had contact with the child 5 days a week with the intention of being rehabilitated back under a Child in Need Plan. Meanwhile, the parents engaged with addiction services, testing negative for anything other than their prescribed medication, and also moved into a more stable property through Wolverhampton Homes.

The child returned to the family home a few months after birth. Early Intervention services continued to support the family, who are now living together successfully.



Parental engagement

This theme focuses on developing the provision of universal services for families in order to support parental engagement. Parents will be supported to develop good parenting skills to enable them to help their child(ren) achieve their full potential. This meets the key strategic priorities, by developing a clear pathway for parents and professionals that promotes an understanding of child development and improves readiness for school.

Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) research shows that parental engagement with their child's learning has a significant impact



on their outcomes. The role of Universal Services Practitioners is to support parents in becoming their child's first educator, as well as supporting families with school readiness. Practitioners and other professionals; including Health workers; are promoting Early Education Funding for eligible 2 year olds and all elements of 3 and 4 year old entitlement. Access to high quality educational experiences can have a significant impact on narrowing the attainment gap.

Through home learning and promotion of services parents will be assisted to build resilience and become the child's first educator also supporting school readiness. This will be measured by monitoring referrals for home learning and attendance at both play and stay and library groups. By developing the existing parent champions' programme and working in partnership with other professionals, promotion of Early Education Funding will support engagement with families within community groups, schools and childcare providers.

Parents



Professionals



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will increase their understanding of their child's developmental milestones and how they can support them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will promote services available to families in their community in order to deliver prevention and early Intervention support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will develop skills and resilience to become their child's primary educator providing good home learning environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will provide child development resources regarding ages and stages to inform parents of expected progress ✓ Will promote awareness and access of the Wolverhampton Information Network website to support parenting ✓ Will support with school readiness by developing a holistic understanding which supports families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will feel supported to participate in services ✓ Will access Bookstart, Play and Stay groups and other universal services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will increase the number of parent champions across the city ✓ Will develop the skills and knowledge of parent champions so that they can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote universal services • Encourage other parents to access Early Education Funding • Enable them to signpost and support families to other services available in their community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will support their children to access high quality Early Education Funding (EEF) for 2,3 and 4 year olds and Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will raise awareness of Early Education Funding and improve the take up of places ✓ Will identify eligible children so that resources can be targeted to the right children and families at the right time

CASE STUDY

Emma's Story



Emma first began receiving support from Whitmore Reans Children Centre in 2013 shortly after becoming a mum for the first time.

She had been experiencing real challenges at home, but thanks to the help and support of staff at the children's centre she was able to get back on the right track, accessing education and training opportunities at Whitmore Reans.

Shortly after, she moved to Wednesfield with her young child, and signed up to and completed the Freedom Programme for victims of domestic abuse run at Wednesfield Children's Village.

As life began to settle down, Emma gained in self-confidence and decided to volunteer on the Freedom Programme, helping support other women who, like her, had lived through domestic abuse.

Emma enjoyed the role so much that when she was asked to consider volunteering as a Parent Champion – and act as an advocate and peer advisor to other parents in her community - she jumped at the chance. In doing so, it gave her the confidence to use her new found skills, knowledge and experiences to try and secure a job working with children and families.

With a new-found fire inside her, Emma worked closely with the Parent Champion Co-ordinator to apply for a job as a Strengthening Families Worker – and in July was successfully appointed to the role. As Emma says, "the harder the struggle the more glorious the triumph!".

"The harder the struggle the more glorious the triumph!"

CASE STUDY

Caroline's Story



A mum-of-six, Caroline was keen to help other parents get the information they need about childcare and other services – and didn't let being heavily pregnant stop her from volunteering at Bingley Children's Centre.

She soon found the confidence to volunteer as a Parent Champion, enjoying training that gave her the skills she needed to work with parents, particularly around setting boundaries.

As well as chatting to parents when they meet up for activities, such as stay and play and the Freedom Programme, telling them about the support available to them and initiatives such as the two-year-old free childcare offer, Caroline

also worked with parents who are facing very difficult personal problems or circumstances – and quickly realised her role was not to try to immediately help others deal with everything, but to refer them to support services where necessary.

Caroline had a thirst to learn, develop and be a good role model to her children, and so during her time as Parent Champion she successfully applied for a part time Strengthening Families Worker post. She is looking forward to taking on the role after the birth of her baby, and also wants to continue being a volunteer Parent Champion.

"I know the skills and experience I have picked up as a Parent Champion will be really useful in my new job supporting local communities to thrive, and I'm looking forward to helping families turn their life around, just like I have."

High quality education

This theme focuses on ensuring all children in the city have access to high quality pre-school experience and education which will enhance and improve their Primary and Secondary Education.

Research (EPPSE3-16+) which tracked children from 1997 through to their educational and developmental outcomes at 16 years old in 2013 continues to drive and shape current government policy. The report demonstrates how pre-school experience continues to influence the outcomes of young children most significantly:

- The quality of pre-school experience predicted both total GCSE scores and English and Maths grades. High education was also linked to better pro-social behavior and lower levels of hyperactivity. The quality of pre-school experience was especially important for children whose parents have low qualifications.
- Attending a high quality pre-school, experiencing a longer duration, or attending settings of higher quality all predicted a greater likelihood of following an academic pathway post 16 as well key findings as a reduced likelihood of taking a lower academic route.

Key findings from Ofsted's good practice survey, "Teaching and play in the early years-a balancing act?" (July 2015) included:

- Accurate assessment of children's starting points was based on constant reflection about what was deemed typical for each child given their chronological age in months. Where we observed this to be most effective, staff entered into frequent discussion, within and between providers, to check and agree their judgments. This included the frequent sharing of information between parents, other pre-school settings and health visitors.
- Collaboration between early year's providers was key to securing a higher quality of teaching and play. We found that where schools and settings shared a site, were directly managed by one overarching leader or had entered into a professional network with others in the locality, expertise was shared effectively to allow all early years professionals to learn from the best. Many had become early year's hubs for their area, championing the importance of early education and raising the quality of learning and development.

Children



Professionals



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will have increased Good Level of Development at the Early Years Foundation Stage and will attain in line with National expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will develop a clear pathway for parents and professionals that promotes a common understanding of child development and how this can be supported ✔ Will establish a robust transition protocol to support children's' move onto statutory education including the sharing of data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will not achieve to a lesser degree if they receive Early Years Pupil Premium compared to those not receiving Early Years Pupil Premium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will develop a school readiness definition to improve readiness for school for all children with particular regard to disadvantaged and vulnerable children at age 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will receive high quality pre school education in settings that are judged to be good or outstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will provide high quality learning environments ✔ Will achieve and maintain a "Good" or above Ofsted judgement ✔ Will provide a support and challenge function within and to settings in order to develop and continually improve practice ✔ Will develop training materials, opportunities and practice to support providers in implementing changes in practice that will impact on children's outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will achieve successful outcomes as a result of early intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Will track cohorts of children to monitor progress ensuring children at a disadvantage are fully supported ✔ Will use their best endeavours through the graduated approach to make sure that children with SEN get the support they need.

CASE STUDY

Mason's Story



Mason moved schools mid-term in 2015 after his previous school raised concerns with his family. His family took him out of his old school to escape the reality of the issues facing them.

He arrived at his new school with minimal language skills – his only verbal utterances were of a vulgar nature, including the use of the expletives in response to peers and staff. His low level communication skills and lack of boundaries within the home learning environment manifested itself through disruptive behaviour, demonstrations of temper and lashing out at staff and children.

The school supported Mason with intensive learning support, rewarding positive behaviour moments with praise, recognition, stickers and reward charts based upon his interests. His initial attendance was sporadic but a relationship was built and a consistent approach to managing his behaviour was applied.

Mason settled at school and his attendance, vocabulary and communication skills improved alongside his understanding of right and wrong. A positive impact was seen and documented within three months, and progress within the prime areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication and language means he is now working within age related expectations.

Indeed, he has become a role model for his peers, staff have a great relationship with both Mason and his mother, and will use this model of support with children who have similar needs in the future.

Workforce development

This theme focuses on challenging and supporting schools and childcare providers to deliver the best education for children and young people through developing a highly skilled Early Years workforce with strong and effective leadership and management. This meets the key strategic priorities, by establishing Early Years forums with a clear programme for improving outcomes. Also to establish a robust transition protocol and to ensure the workforce support effective transitions between settings.

There are some high quality Early Years practitioners across the city who are supporting other members of the childcare workforce to develop their skills within provisions. The model environments focus on strengthening leadership and management to raise the quality of learning environments, progress of implementation is monitored during quality support visits. The Local Offer came into effect from September 2014; this provides parents with information regarding how early years provision can support children with additional needs. Research demonstrates that inspirational practitioners providing stimulating and challenging environments support children in accelerating their learning.

Through the promotion of focused early years forums the workforce will be supported to share and disseminate good practice, building effective working relationships with other partners such as Wolverhampton university, City of Wolverhampton college and Adult Education services, to provide a consistent approach in developing high quality early years practice. Regular monitoring of the quality of early years practitioners entering the workforce and maintaining a continuous cycle of staff development within provision, will assist in ensuring the stability and quality of practitioners.

Children



✔ Will learn in high quality learning environments

Professionals



✔ Will share and disseminate good practice

✔ Will maintain a continuous cycle of staff development within the provision to ensure the stability and quality of the workforce

✔ Will develop and maintain Early Years forums to enable leaders and managers to enhance their knowledge of the sector and to build locality networks

✔ Will develop high levels of skills in graduate leaders

✔ Will access training support including model environments and peer support opportunities

✔ Will achieve to their full potential with those more disadvantaged than their peers progressing well.

✔ Will demonstrate an in depth knowledge of child development and how to support families

✔ Will embed effective key worker practice within provision

✔ Will implement observation planning and assessment to meet individuals needs and interests

CASE STUDY

Fun 4 Kidz Day Nursery and Teeny Weenies Playgroup



Wolverhampton's Early Intervention service recognises that working practitioners are one of the best sources of expertise and knowledge in the field, and has developed a peer-to-peer support network to improve outcomes for children by sharing knowledge and skills.

Teeny Weenies Playgroup wanted support to further enhance their quality and improve the outcomes for their children and was successfully paired with Fun 4 Kids, an outstanding day nursery with exceptional leadership and management strategies, an area of improvement needed by the playgroup.

Representatives from both provisions attended a meeting with a Quality and Access Officer to discuss the peer-to-peer support and identify key areas which would form an action plan.

The mentoring began in December 2015 with a number of visits taking place over the following months during which a range of issues were discussed, from policies and procedures, strategies and disciplinary processes to planning and staff training and support.

The support has been found to be very productive, with improvements being evident, especially around leadership and management and a number of new systems in place which are bringing about positive results.

The programme will continue when the playgroup returns in the autumn term, and the Quality and Access Officer will review the programme with both settings.



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Performance management and governance

The project group and the strategy will be supported, challenged and monitored through the Education Board for internal purposes.

For partner engagement the project group and the strategy will be supported, challenged and monitored through the Strengthening Families Board on a quarterly basis.

The strategy will be reviewed annually by the Children's Trust Board.

Detailed action plans will be developed across the life of the strategy to drive the required improvement under each of the key themes.

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