



Northumberland  
County Council

# Conception to 5 Integrated Plan

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## **Foreword**

We want Northumberland to be a great place to grow up for all our children and young people. The 2023-26 Conception to 5 Integrated Plan sets out how children living in our county will be given the support they need to have the best start in life.

The Conception to 5 Integrated Plan sets out our local partnership's vision for enhancing the integration of services working with children and their families from conception to age 5 in Northumberland. It outlines the aims and priorities for all services across health, education, social care and the community, setting out a focus that will secure foundations that will be long lasting through early childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.

Evidence tells us that what happens during pregnancy and in the early years of a child's life shapes children's physical health, their language and communication, and their emotional wellbeing. Inequalities during this time can affect children's readiness for school, education, training, skills, employment and healthy relationships.

This plan has been developed in response to the gaps appearing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and focuses on closing these gaps as early as possible with a view to ensuring that each and every child is ready for school.

For this plan to work, we need parents, carers and professionals across education, health, social care and community services to work together and take full responsibility for their role in preparing children effectively for their futures.

We want children across Northumberland to have the strong foundations they need to reach their full potential. Through the agreement of shared aims, priorities and key messages, we can provide the right support at the right time, helping all children have the best start in life.

David Street, Director of Education, SEND and Skills

## **About this Plan**

The plan has been developed with the aim of enhancing the integration of services available to Northumberland families with children from conception to age 5. The plan promotes equality across the county by supporting the closure of the disadvantage gap, helping every child to have the best start in life.

The framework had been co-produced by professionals across education, health, social care and community services, along with 25 Northumberland families. This has enabled us to create shared priorities for professionals working with children from conception to age 5 to achieve collaboratively.

As such it links strategically with a number of other local key strategies and plans including:

[Corporate Plan](#)

[Northumberland Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[Children and Young People's Plan](#)

[Early Help Strategy](#)

[Northumberland Local Area Strategy](#)

[The Northumberland Strategic Inclusion Strategy](#)

[RCSLT Strategic Vision](#)

## **The Importance of a Child's Early Years**

The formative years of a child's life have a significant impact on childhood and later life chances (Department for Education, 2021). From conception, parents work with health professionals. As time progresses, parents and their child experience increased contact from education providers, community groups, and at times, Early Help, Family Hubs and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) professionals. In Northumberland we recognise the importance of getting these crucial first years of life right for every child, and this requires professionals to work effectively together.

Northumberland health, education, social care and community services have therefore come together to create this shared strategic plan, helping to align priorities across services to best meet the needs of Northumberland families from when a child is conceived to the end of their reception year.

## **The National Picture**

Services working with children at Northumberland County Council follow a number of national statutory duties, including, the Children's Act (1989), Children's Act (2004), The Childcare Act (2006), Child Poverty Act (2010), Equalities Act (2010), Children and Families Act (2014), The Childcare Act (2016), Children and Social Work Act (2017), Early Years and Childcare Statutory Duties for Local Authorities (2018) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

These policies hold us, as a Local Authority, to account for our role in ensuring the safeguarding, welfare and education of our youngest children, while reducing inequalities and child poverty across Northumberland.

The import role of services across education, health, social care and the community is recognised nationally. The [Best Start for Life Report \(2021\)](#) recognises the need for an increased focus on service integration during a child's first 1001 days of life, from conception to age 2. This, along with the introduction of the [Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme Guide \(2022\)](#) identify the impact service integration has on tackling disadvantage, identifying needs early and putting early intervention in place during a child's first 1001 days of life, from conception to age 2. This, along with the introduction of the [Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme Guide \(2022\)](#) identify the impact service integration has on tackling disadvantage, identifying needs early and putting early intervention in place.

The Northumberland Family Hubs work to develop local support and service integration across the 0-19 age range. This plan focuses specifically on conception to age 5 and the actions Northumberland County Council and partners set out to achieve; helping to enhance integrated working across all services working with under 5s and their families.

## **The Northumberland Context**

In Northumberland, we recognise that from the moment a child is conceived, they are citizens of the future. We want all our children and young people to have the best start in life. It is therefore vital that from conception, children and their families are supported effectively to live healthier, happier lives, receive support and high-quality education, and access help quickly, when needed.

By working together across all conception to 5 services, we can work more efficiently to tackle inequalities, increase wellbeing in our communities and support the economic growth of Northumberland, both now and for generations to come.

## **How to Use this Plan**

This plan is for all professionals that work with children from conception to age 5 in Northumberland.

The plan outlines the overarching aims and priorities for the under 5s. It should be used by services and teams to inform their personal aims and objectives, aiding the alignment of services to best meet the needs of children and families.

The attached appendices can be used by staff across the workforce to support their continued professional development along with their awareness and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of other services.

## **Training and Development**

In Northumberland County Council, we recognise the important role continued professional development plays in delivering quality services to children and families.

A training plan has been created which can be accessed by professionals working with children from conception to age 5 and their families (see Appendix 1). Although we recommend all training is completed over time, many professionals may already have in depth knowledge and training in specific areas. Therefore, some training is identified as 'recommended', 'optional' or for specific practitioners only.

The recommended training comes in several formats, including online self-directed learning, statutory training, face to face learning and as guidance materials.

As community services cover many different professionals working in a variety of roles, they have not been included in the training grid. However, all training can be accessed via the 'Learning Together' platform, so is available to all.

If you do not currently have access to the 'Learning Together' platform, [please create a new account by following this link](#) and access will be granted.

## **Vision and Values**

Our vision:

Our vision builds on plans already in place across Northumberland County Council and North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB). It provides a focus for all services working with children and families from conception to age 5. Our vision is that:

“Every child is supported by the right person at the right time to achieve their potential, regardless of circumstance.”

The values we will uphold across all conception to 5 services are that:

- Families are front and centre of everything we do;
- We respect individuality and personal circumstances;
- We actively listen to each other;
- We recognise and value the challenges and difficulties that families face;
- We respect and utilise the expertise of other professionals;
- Any person involved with children under 5 understand their role in supporting; children and actively take on this role.

## Strategic Aims

1. Children and families will be effectively supported through:
  - A no wrong door policy;
  - Strengthened integration of education, health, social care and community services;
  - Effective communication within and across services;
  - Services working collaboratively to provide the right support for each individual child.
2. Services will be equipped to work collaboratively through:
  - Access to evidence-based training to enhance workforce knowledge around the roles and expertise of different services – to increase staff confidence to be responsive to emerging needs;
  - The development of shared priorities for services to achieve in collaboration;
  - Shared collection of data to better identify areas of need across Northumberland and joint action planning to provide prompt and suitable support for communities;
  - Wide dissemination of the Conception to 5 Integrated Plan, supporting adults across Northumberland to actively take a role in supporting children's school and life readiness.
3. Outcomes for children will improve and feedback, views and opinions of key stakeholders will be valued and considered through:
  - Sharing of an annual questionnaire to gather feedback and assess the impact of the plan from the perspective of stakeholders, including the workforce and parents;
  - Key performance indicators, outlined within the [Corporate Plan \(page 27\)](#), are used to monitor and measure the impact of the plan on improved outcomes for children.

## Our Shared Priorities

### Priority 1

To support children's communication and language development

Actions to achieve this priority:

- Disseminate the Communication and Language Framework training amongst all professionals working with the conception to 5 age range.
- Health, education, libraries, Family Hubs and Early Help First Contact to promote the Tiny Talkers programmes and referral.
- Data unit to support the use of intelligent collective data, including input, analysis and action planning collectively, rather than as single agencies.
- Timely and appropriate referrals to Speech and Language Therapy.



## **Priority 2**

To narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers

Actions to achieve this priority:

- Collective promotion of Early Years education entitlement, Early Years Pupil Premium funding and Disability Access Fund across all services.
- Health, education, libraries, Family Hubs and Early Help First Contact to promote the Learning Together Through Plan, Learning Together Through Play Additional Needs and PEEPs programmes and referral.
- Understand and share local intelligence to promote entitlement across education, health and Family Hubs.

## **Priority 3**

To support the emotional, mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of the under 5s and their families

Actions to achieve this priority:

- Agree consistent health messages and the dissemination of these messages across all services.
- Create a shared vision around the impact of physical health on emotional development and educational readiness.
- Awareness and promotion of Family Hubs programmes across all services and collective sharing of relevant information to enhance service integration.

## **Priority 4**

To work together to support effective transition throughout a children's life from conception to age 5

Actions to achieve this priority:

- Collective promotion of the School Readiness Passport with education providers and families.
- All services to request parental consent to share information between services upon engagement.

## **Monitoring Progress**

To monitor the progress of all services working within this plan, leaders from each service will collectively complete an annual review. The outcome of which will be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Team leaders, line managers and practitioners in front line roles should collectively prepare feedback prior to the review meeting to ensure the plan reflects the needs of the workforce and the families we each support. This should include information around:

- The actions taken to support the achievement of the shared priorities;
- Information about what is working well;
- Data linked to key performance indicators, as identified within the Corporate Plan, to monitor the impact of the plan over time;
- What needs to change to enhance integrated working further.

A questionnaire will also be shared with families and professionals to gather individual views and feedback.

## Appendix 1

Training identified as 'recommended' should be completed by professionals unless they have a higher level of understanding of qualification in the relevant field.

Click [here to access the Conception to 5 Integrated Plan training package](#) on Learning Together.

### Recommended Training for Professionals: Safeguarding and Welfare

\* R = Recommended

RP = Relevant Practitioner

RS = Relevant Services

Course	Education	Inclusive Education Services	Health	Early Help Locality Teams
Safeguarding for the Children's Workforce	Y	Y	Y	Y
Safeguarding Children and Adult Awareness	Y	Y	Y	Y
Multi-Agency Child Protection	Y	Y	Y	Y
Designated Safeguarding Lead/Refresher (relevant for DSLs only. Training to be applied for through service facilitator)	Y	Y	Y	Y (or equivalent)
Signs of Safety Awareness	Y	Y	Y	Y
Signs of Safety Bitesize Sessions (recorded webinars)	R	R	R	R
Signs of Safety Partner Training	R	R	R	Y
Early Help for Children and Families	Y	Y	Y	Y
Early Help Assessment	RP	RP	RP	RP
Parental Conflict and its Impact on Children	RP	RP	Y	Y
Recognising and Responding to Domestic Abuse	Y	Y	Y	Y
Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Children	Y	Y	Y	Y
Impact of Domestic Abuse	Y	R	R	Y
Prevent	Y	Y	Y	Y
Introduction to Attachment	Y	Y	R	Y

Course	Education	Inclusive Education Services	Health	Early Help Locality Teams
Adverse Childhood Experiences	Y	Y	R	Y
Introduction to Resilience	Y	R	R	Y
C.A.R.E Trauma Informed Awareness	Y	R	R	Y
Working with the Impact of Early Adversity	R	R	R	RP
Child Safety and Accident Prevention	Y	R	R	RS

### Training Courses – Child Development

Course	Education	Inclusive Education Services	Health	Early Help Locality Teams
Child Development	Y	R	R	Y
Understanding SEN Support	Y	R	Y	Y
Vulnerable Babies	<i>For settings with babies</i>	RS	Y	Y
Promoting Oral Health for Childcare and Young People	Y	R	R	RS
What is School Readiness	Y	Y	Y	Y
Understanding Early Years Entitlements	Y	R	Y	Y
Inclusion and SEND in Early Years – Ordinarily Available Provision	Y	R	R	Y
Northumberland Speech, Language and Communication Framework	Y	R	Y	Y

### **Appendix 2 – Northumberland Integrated Services Offer**

This provides an overview of the full services offer available to families in Northumberland from the moment their child is conceived until the end of their reception school year.

### **Appendix 3 – Integrated 2 Year Old Review Flowchart**

This flowchart outlines the agreed roles and responsibilities of professionals involved in the statutory Progress Check at Age 2 (completed by education settings) and the Healthy Child 2 - 2 ½ Year Review (completed by Health Visitors) to support the integration of the checks within Northumberland.

### **Appendix 4 – Roles and Responsibilities to Support Early Intervention**

This document outlines to roles and responsibilities of all professionals working with children and families from conception to 5 years to meet their needs promptly and provide the right services at the right time.