



OFFICIAL EXECUTIVE DECISION NOTICE

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Notice is hereby given that the following decision(s) have been made today by Cabinet Members at the London Borough of Hillingdon:

Title of decision	BEST START IN LIFE 2026-2031
Reference No.	2026/1684
Date of decision	Wednesday 15 April 2026
Call-in expiry date	Wednesday 22 April 2026
Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Relevant Wards	N/A

Decision made

Cabinet Members making the decision	Councillor Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Decision	Agreed That the Cabinet Member: 1. Noted the strategic direction and priorities outlined in the strategy; and 2. Approved the proposed strategy and timelines.
Reason for decision	<p>1. 2026–2031 sets out a clear, evidence driven vision for improving early childhood outcomes across Hillingdon, grounded in local needs, lived experience, and national guidance. The strategy identifies key challenges including inequalities, rising SEND needs, speech and language delays, parental wellbeing pressures, and gaps in early development which require a coordinated and preventative whole system response.</p> <p>The strategic direction articulates four core priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Better Support for Families;- Healthy Beginnings- More Accessible Early Education;- Improving Early Years Quality <p>Each supported by measurable commitments designed to strengthen family resilience, improve health, enhance early learning, and raise Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes across the borough. Noting this direction ensures visibility of the overarching ambitions and the collective multiagency</p>

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	<p>plan necessary to drive improved long-term outcomes for children aged 0–5 and their families in preparation for mid and late childhood as well as young adulthood.</p> <p>2. Endorsing the strategy and timelines is required to enable the Council and partners to move to full implementation of the delivery plan from April 2026, ensuring Hillingdon is able to meet national expectations set through the Best Start Family Hubs programme and the Government’s target for 75.5% of children to achieve a Good Level of Development by 2028.</p> <p>The timelines proposed in the strategy reflect local readiness, national funding schedules, and the need for coordinated multiagency mobilisation, including workforce development, expanded parenting and Home Learning Environment programmes, strengthened early identification pathways, and improved access to childcare in high need areas. The strategy also aligns with the national requirement for local authorities to strengthen their early years system leadership, develop integrated Family Hubs, and publish a Best Start in Life Local Plan by March 2026.</p> <p>Cabinet Member endorsement enables the governance, partnership arrangements, and delivery structures to proceed at pace, ensuring that children and families benefit from earlier support, more accessible services, and improved early development outcomes.</p>
<p>Alternative options considered and rejected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing/ continue current arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rejected - existing provision would not address widening inequalities, rising SEND need, speech & language delays, or gaps in school readiness. • Delay the strategy until all national guidance is finalised <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rejected - The DfE requires implementation of parenting and HLE interventions from April 2026, and publication of a Best Start in Life Local Plan by March 2026. • Implement only limited/ thematic initiatives (e.g., SLC only, childcare only) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rejected - Early years outcomes depend on multiple interconnected factors, such as, family help, health, early education access, SEND provision and workforce development, and a narrow approach would reduce impact. • Not utilise or partially utilise the DfE Grants

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rejected - Risks losing the ringfenced grant, reduces local readiness and delays April 2026 implementation.
Classification	Part I – Public
Link to associated report	Here
Relevant Officer contact & Directorate	Tehseen Kauser, Director of Children’s Social Care Antony Madden, Children’s Services
Any interest declared by the Cabinet Member(s) / dispensation granted	N/A

Implementation of decision & scrutiny call-in

[Internal Use only]	
When can this decision be implemented by officers?	<p>Officers can implement Cabinet Member decision in this notice only from the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period which is:</p> <p>5pm on Wednesday 22 April 2026</p> <p>However, this is subject to the decision not being called in by Councillors on the relevant Select Committee. Upon receipt of a valid call-in request, Democratic Services will immediately advise the relevant officer(s) and the decision must then be put on hold.</p>
Councillor scrutiny call-in of this decision	<p>Councillors on the relevant Select Committee shown in this notice may request to call-in this decision. The request must be before the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period above.</p> <p>Councillors should use the Scrutiny Call-in App (link below) on their devices to initiate any call-in request. Further advice can be sought from Democratic Services if required:</p> <p>Scrutiny Call-In - Power Apps (secure)</p>

Further information	<p>These decisions, where applicable, have been taken under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>This is the formal notice by the Council of the above executive decision, including links to the reports where applicable.</p> <p>If you would like more information on this decision, please contact Democratic Services on 01895 250636 or email: democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk.</p> <p>Circulation of this decision notice is to a variety of people including Members of the Council, Corporate Directors, Officers, Group Secretariats and the Public. Copies are also placed on the Council's website.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Democratic Services London Borough of Hillingdon Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge UB8 1UW</p>
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