

Family Hubs to Launch in Every English Council Under £500 Million Plan

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Family hubs designed to support parents, and young people will be established in every local authority in England by April 2026, as part of a £500 million government plan aimed at improving outcomes for children, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

The initiative, announced by Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson, will build on existing family hubs by scaling the programme nationally. The expanded rollout is expected to help an additional 500,000 children and families, providing access to a range of services including birth registration, midwifery care, parenting advice, youth support, and financial guidance. Officials say the hubs will also act as central access points for social care and local health services.

The policy forms a key part of the Labour government's "Best Start" programme, aimed at breaking the link between poverty and poor life outcomes. Phillipson said the new hubs are intended to give families "a lifeline" by offering comprehensive early support. "It's the driving mission of this government to break the link between a child's background and what they go on to achieve," she stated.

Family hubs are not a new concept. The idea builds on the "Sure Start" centres introduced in the early 2000s under the New Labour government, which were gradually defunded and closed after 2010 under Conservative-led austerity policies. In 2023, the Conservative government under Rishi Sunak launched 400 family hubs across 75 councils, but Labour now aims to ensure coverage across all 153 local authorities in England, with a goal to expand the network to 1,000 hubs by 2028.

However, the announcement has drawn criticism from the opposition. Shadow Education Secretary Laura Trott questioned how much of the scheme is genuinely new, suggesting much of it could be a rebranding of existing services. "This is a government defined by broken promises and endless U-turns," she said.

Despite political disagreements, the plan has been welcomed by child welfare organisations. Save the Children UK expressed support, calling it a step in the right direction for families seeking coordinated help. Dan Paskins, the charity's executive director of policy, advocacy and campaigns, noted that placing parenting, education, and health services in one accessible space has been shown to work effectively in local communities.

The full rollout of the hubs is expected to be completed in phases, with additional resources directed at areas most in need.