

Family Hubs to Launch Nationwide Across England by 2026

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The UK government has announced that family hubs will be rolled out across every local authority in England by April 2026, as part of a £500 million initiative aimed at supporting half a million children in disadvantaged areas. The plan expands on earlier efforts to bring essential services together for families under one roof, with the goal of offering more accessible, coordinated support.

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said the new “Best Start” family hubs will serve as a vital resource for parents and children, especially in communities facing hardship. Describing the hubs as “a lifeline,” she emphasised that they will play a central role in breaking the cycle between poverty and educational outcomes.

The hubs will provide a wide range of services, including midwifery support, birth registration, parenting classes, youth clubs, and debt advice. In addition to improving access to essential care, they are expected to help families navigate complex systems by housing services in one location.

The concept of family hubs traces back to the Sure Start centres introduced by the Labour government in the early 2000s. These centres focused on early education, childcare, and health support but saw widespread closures after 2010 due to budget cuts under the Conservative-led government. In 2023, the Conservative government under Rishi Sunak launched a new phase of 400 hubs across 75 councils.

Labour’s current plan builds on this foundation with a pledge to establish hubs in all local authorities by 2026 and expand to 1,000 hubs by the end of 2028. When asked whether this simply continues Conservative policy, Phillipson insisted Labour is “going further” and “revitalising family services” with a broader and deeper offering.

Despite cross-party acknowledgement of the importance of early support, political debate continues. Conservative MP and Shadow Education Secretary Laura Trott questioned the novelty of the

announcement, calling it “part of a wider pattern” of rebranding and broken promises.

Charities have cautiously welcomed the expansion. Save the Children praised the plan, with executive director Dan Paskins stating that placing healthcare, parenting, and educational support in one location is “an approach which works.” He expressed optimism that the new hubs would make it easier for families to access the help they need.

With implementation already underway, the success of the family hub programme will likely hinge on sustained funding, clear delivery models, and collaboration across agencies, aimed at giving children the best possible start in life.