

THINKING ABOUT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

A guide to mapping services
and interventions that are
available in your local area



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Visit <https://foundations.org.uk/our-work/reports/family-hubs-planning-framework> to download the other Family Hubs Planning Framework resources.

About Foundations

At Foundations, the national What Works Centre for Children & Families, we believe all children should have the foundational relationships they need to thrive in life. By researching and evaluating the effectiveness of family support services and interventions, we're generating the actionable evidence needed to improve them, so more vulnerable children can live safely and happily at home and lead happier, healthier lives. Foundations was formed through the merger of What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) and the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF).

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INTRODUCTION

Every local area has services and interventions that support babies, children, young people and their families. They include everything from the first services that parents (or expectant parents) turn to when they are struggling with an issue, to targeted support that focuses on specific needs.

What's in this resource?

This resource helps you map the services and interventions that are available in your local area. It will support you to:

- develop a shared local understanding of current services and interventions, including what they aim to achieve and who they are for
- develop a visual map of what support is on offer, which could be used by practitioners to gain confidence in what referral pathways are available across different areas
- identify gaps and duplications in services which support families
- identify strengths, where the support offer is working well and could be developed further
- identify where there is a case for change and what steps would improve the local provision.

You can use this resource to map family services across several areas, including those relevant to:

- infant feeding
- parenting support
- young children's home learning environments
- perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships.

By working through the steps in this resource, you will:

- define the scope and purpose of your service mapping
- collect information about existing services and interventions
- check and make sense of your information
- develop a map of services
- identify next steps and prioritise improvements.

Service mapping is one part of a contextual assessment that will support you to develop your local Family Hub approach.

This resource can be used alongside the resource ‘**Thinking about your local population needs**’ to **discover** how your current support for families provides for local communities, as you plan your local Family Hub offer. It could also be used as you **review** progress and reflect on remaining and emerging challenges in developing your Family Hub model. It is an accessible guide, which could be used by those working in the Family Hub team as a commissioner, manager or leader responsible for developing the local Family Hub; while you may be supported by a data analysis team, this guide does not require specialist data analytical skills to use. You can see how this resource fits with others in the Family Hubs planning Framework in Figure 2.

Figure 1

An example of a map of support for families (gap map) from the appendix, template 6. Each bar represents a service or intervention targeting a particular outcome for a particular age group


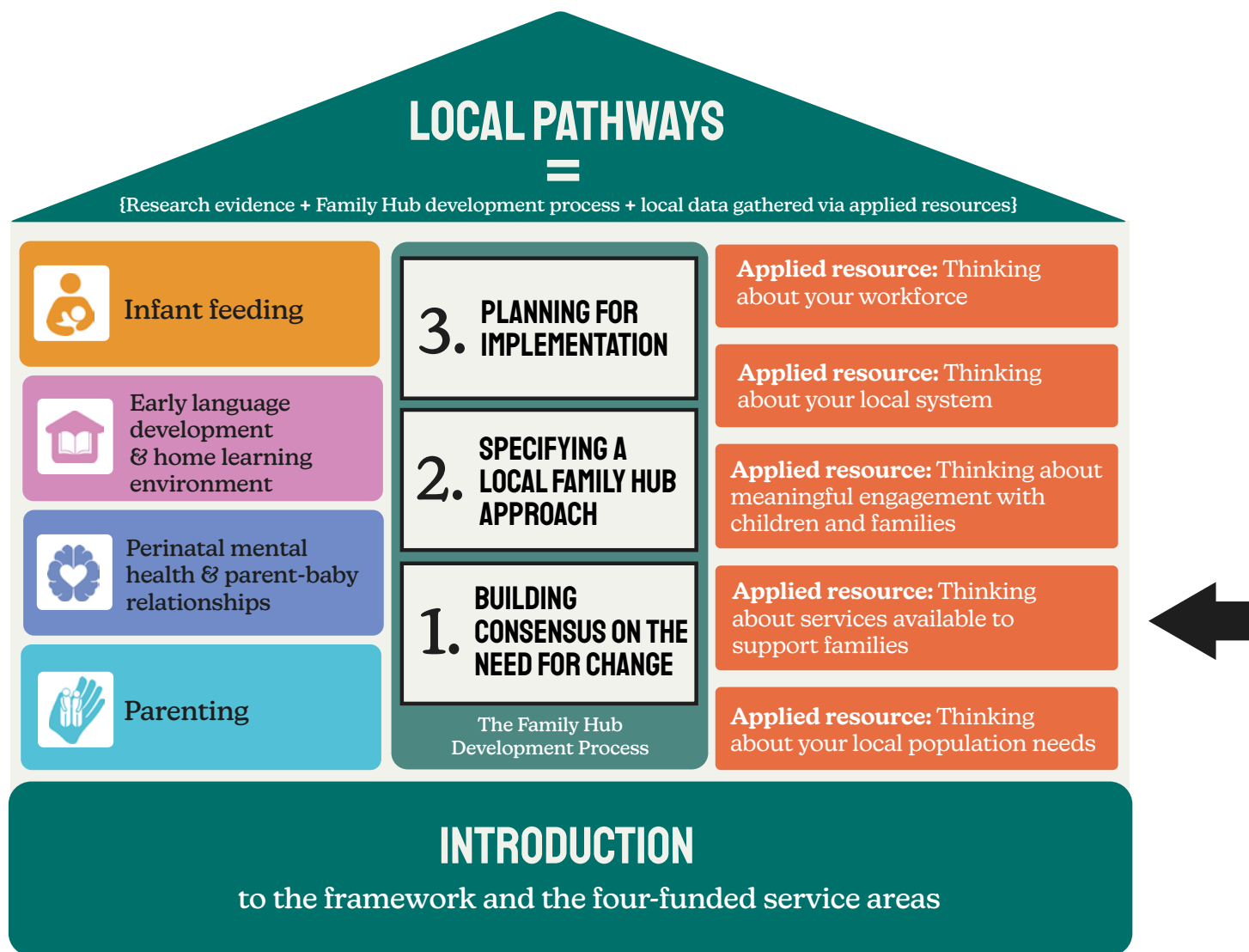
PRIMARY OUTCOME		SERVICE												INTERVENTION											
		Pre birth	0-12 m	12-18 m	18-24 m	2-3 y	3-5 y	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4	16-18 y	18-25 y	Pre birth	0-12 m	12-18 m	18-24 m	2-3 y	3-5 y	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4	16-18 y	18-25 y
UNIVERSAL SUPPORT	Improve parenting	■	■			■	■																		
	Improve parent-child relationship											■		■	■										
	Improve home learning environment						■											■	■						
	Improve infant feeding experience	■	■											■											
	Improve birthing experience																								
	Improve birthing experience																								

Figure 2

The overall structure of the Family Hubs Planning Framework alongside the processes necessary for planning and implementing the Family Hub model in your local area.



The arrow shows where family support mapping sits within the wider framework of resources and processes.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES?

Support for families is any in-person, digital or virtual service or intervention that:

- aims to improve outcomes for children, young people and their parents and caregivers
- are delivered to families directly
- may have eligibility requirements, which are used to target families who are at risk, or who have an identified specific need (targeted selective and targeted indicated interventions)

These services and interventions may include:

- evidence-based interventions, such as those included in the Guidebook*
- interventions developed locally or in other areas
- courses (for example, antenatal, parenting and co-parenting classes, parenting through separation, parenting alone, wellbeing programmes and parent-and-child sessions)
- therapy (for example, mental health support for a child or a parent, family therapy, and help to address substance misuse)
- advice and information (for example, on home learning)
- respite care and family mediation.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY INTERVENTION?

An intervention is a defined group of activities that aims to improve outcomes for children and their families by achieving change. An intervention has:

- beginning, a middle and an end
- a set process for the activities
- eligibility requirements, which are used to target families who are at risk, for example because they are experiencing economic hardship (targeted selective interventions), or who have an identified specific need, for example a diagnosed health issue (targeted indicated interventions).

* Go to <https://guidebook.eif.org.uk/>

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Every local community is different, so it is important to use local data to consider the needs of all families in your local area. However, at the national level, the disadvantaged groups who are underrepresented in service provision include:

- low-income families
- minority ethnic families
- young parents
- LGBTQ+ families
- parents with mental health difficulties
- families of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

You may want to keep this in mind as you go through the steps to map your family support and make sure that you have built in considerations of race, equality, diversity, inclusion and equity (REDIE) at each step. For example, you may want to:

- include REDIE in your mapping aims or research questions
- include questions in your survey to collect specific information about access to services for disadvantaged groups, or adapted services and interventions
- distribute your survey to a wide range of stakeholders, including voluntary and community sector organisations which work with particular communities
- make sense of the information you collect by looking at how well the local offer meets the needs of specific communities in your area
- develop maps of support for families across different communities in your area.

MAPPING YOUR LOCAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Getting ready to map your support for families

There are four elements in getting ready to map your support for families: understand what outcomes you want to achieve; build a shared interest; establish the right team; and incorporate mapping into your business plan. These may happen at the same time, and feed into one another. For instance, establishing the right team depends on what outcomes you want to achieve, and the team also contributes to deciding on those outcomes.

You will get the most out of the mapping process if someone takes responsibility for managing the process. The person leading this work (the mapping lead) does not need to be an expert in data collection and analysis – we have included templates as part of the step-by-step approach set out in this resource.

The mapping lead will oversee the process. They will work with key stakeholders to collect and analyse data, so they should be able to work well with stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sector. Make sure the mapping lead has enough time and resources to plan and direct the mapping process.

Mapping is a team effort. Think about whether you will need extra support for specific tasks, such as administration, data collection, data management and analysis.

Figure 3

Getting ready to map your support for families

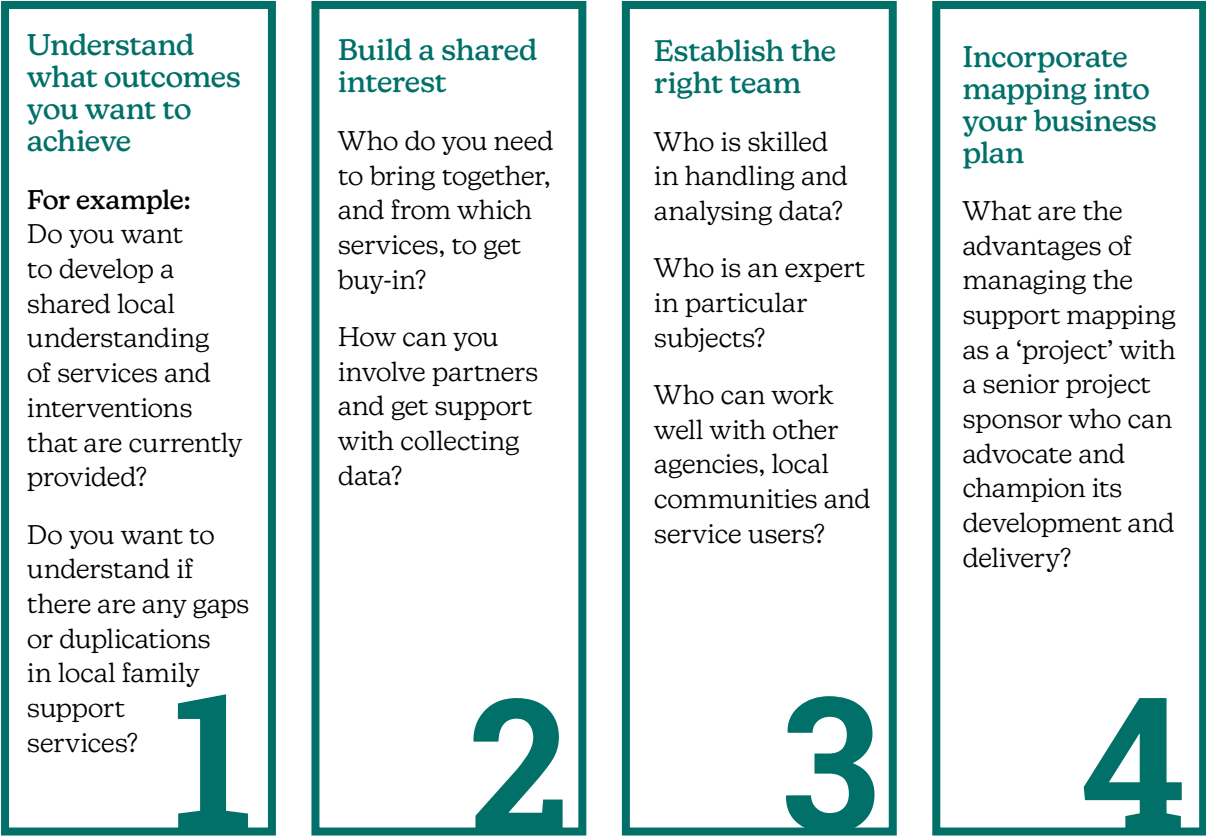
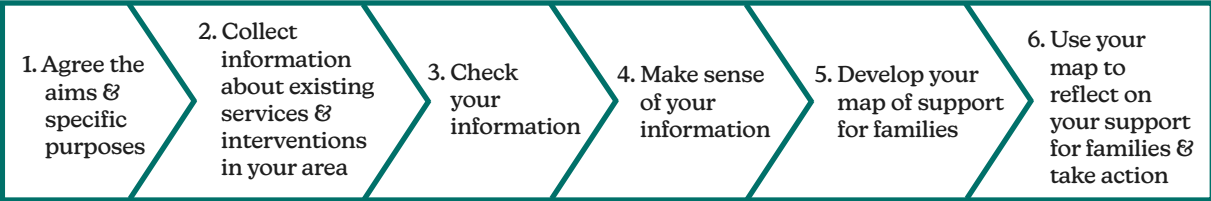


Figure 4

Overview of the six steps to map support for families



Six steps to map your support for families

Step 1: Agree the aims and specific purposes

First, set out why you are mapping support for families in your local area (the purpose) and what support you will be mapping (the scope).

You could define the purpose and scope by agreeing on the main question that the mapping should answer. The clearer your question (main purpose) is, the better you can tailor this resource to meet your needs.

Mapping all support offers can help you identify what improvements to prioritise in your local area. On the other hand, focusing on a particular outcome or area of support that you are interested in would make the process faster.

To define what you want to map, think about your priorities and objectives. Here are some different ways you could approach this:

- You could map all the support offered to families during maternity and the early years.
- You could focus on a particular outcome, such as positive parenting behaviours, better perinatal mental health and parent–infant relationships, higher rates of infant feeding, or better mental health among young people.
- You might prioritise the areas of support that you know are weaker in your local area.
- You might first consider what information has been collected in the past, and then work out where the family support mapping could add value (for example, to a work area or group of service users)
- When agreeing the scope of your mapping exercise, you may also want to include a specific question about how the local offer is reaching and providing support to disadvantaged groups.

Step 2: Collect information about existing services and interventions

The second step when mapping support for families is to gather data to help you understand, for example:

- what services and support are available in your area
- the outcomes supported by the local offer, such as improved school readiness, reduced parental conflict, higher rates of infant feeding, a more positive home learning environment, improved perinatal and infant mental health, or better health among young people
- the families and communities who access support
- the workforce who deliver the support, including health visitors, midwives, mental health teams, early help family support, therapists, MASH, Voluntary and Community Sector organisations (VCS)
- the delivery of support, including mode and format
- the funding and costs involved in providing services and interventions.

Tip: Think about the language used in your local area, and the partners and communities you are working with. Adapt the questions to use terms which will be familiar in your area, and to include relevant answer options for your partners.

We recommend using a survey to gather your data. In the **appendix, template 1**, you can find a list of questions you might want to use, along with an explanation for why you might want to include each question and how it could give you valuable information. You can choose the questions that are most relevant to your local context, and adapt and tailor the questions to your local area and to the aims of your mapping exercise.



If the aim is to map services and interventions that focus on a **positive home learning environment**, you might contact:

- primary care and community health services (such as midwifery, health visiting and school nursing)
- child development centres
- children's therapies: speech and language, occupational health and physiotherapy
- early help family support teams
- local authority front door services (including early help triage and multi-agency safeguarding hubs)
- children's and young people's mental health services
- the voluntary sector
- community groups
- peer groups (such as support for parents and caregivers).



If the aim is to map services and interventions that support **perinatal mental health & parent-infant relationships**, you might contact:

- perinatal mental health services
- specialist parent-infant relationship teams
- early attachment services
- adult mental health services
- domestic abuse services
- alcohol and substance abuse services
- children's and young people's mental health services
- primary care and community health services (such as midwifery, health visiting and school nursing)
- child development centres
- early help family support teams
- local authority front door services (including early help triage and multi-agency safeguarding hubs)
- the voluntary sector
- community groups
- peer groups (such as support for parents and caregivers).



If the aim is to map services and interventions that focus on **infant feeding**, you might contact:

- Midwifery services, including lactation specialists
- Community health services, including health visiting
- Primary care services (such as obstetricians, GPs, and infant feeding teams)
- Voluntary and Community Sector organisations providing antenatal programmes
- Voluntary and Community Sector organisations providing infant feeding advice and support
- Peer groups and support services (such as support groups for parents and caregivers).



If the aim is to map services and interventions that focus on **parenting support**, you might contact:

- Primary care and community health services (such as midwifery and health visiting)
- Specialist parent-infant relationship teams
- Early attachment services
- Early help family support teams
- Child development centres
- Services providing specialist support for children identified with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Local authority front door services (including early help triage and multi-agency safeguarding hubs)
- Adult mental health services
- Child & Adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations offering antenatal and parenting programmes and support
- Peer support groups
- Parent and baby groups, and toddler groups.

Once your survey is ready, ask those who oversee the relevant services and interventions to complete it. For instance, you may contact those overseeing services and interventions covering maternity, children from 2 to 5 years old, and young people. What support is relevant will depend on the purpose and scope of your mapping process.

It is important to give all stakeholders the opportunity to respond to the survey. You should plan enough time to collect the data. Your mapping lead will probably have to contact participating stakeholders regularly to make sure they can complete the questionnaire within the time limit you set.

Tip: There may be teams who you want to contact across three main service types: statutory services, health partners, and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations. Think about particular challenges for each and ways to reach them. For instance, consider who can build trust with VCS organisations and support them in returning the survey accurately; think about how time pressure or data sharing issues might affect health partners.

We recommend doing your survey electronically. This makes it easier to reach a wide group of stakeholders. There are no printing or material costs, and the data is recorded automatically.

Figure 5

Survey template to gather information about existing services & interventions (see appendix, template 1).

Suggested question to include in your survey	Type of question	Explanation of how each question is important and useful
6.	<p>Which format most accurately reflects the way the service or intervention is delivered? [Closed-ended]</p> <p>Example options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information or self-help • Drop-in sessions • Individual (one-to-one) format • In small groups (up to six people) • In medium groups (up to 30 people) • In large groups (more than 30 people) • Other (please specify). 	<p>Some families might prefer interventions that are delivered individually, while others might prefer to be in a larger group. Understanding the range of formats available can help you reflect on how accessible the support is to different communities in your local area.</p>

A set of core questions, for most surveys, and a set of advanced questions, for specific purposes or more depth

Suggested multiple choice answers which can be tailored to your local area

Step 3: Check your information

Before starting your analysis, it is important to check the quality of your data. Use the questions below to help with this:

- How complete is it? How much data is missing?
- How representative is it? How many contacted agencies completed the survey? Which sectors or areas of support do they represent?
- Is the data clear and easy to understand?

If some agencies you contacted did not provide information, you might want to contact them again to make sure your information is as complete and representative as possible. If you have concerns about information which is missing at this stage, make a note of this, and consider what the implications might be for making sense of your data and putting together your map of support for families.

Step 4: Make sense of your information

Next, you need to analyse the data to understand what services and support are available in your area. For some of the data collected, you will be able to use simple quantitative

methods to explore the prevalence and distribution of services and interventions, who can use them or what geographical areas they cover. For instance, you might work out how many services or interventions are available for each age group (prevalence), and which group has the most or least on offer to them (distribution). In the appendix, **template 2**, you can find more information about how to approach the analysis, and suggestions of how to analyse the responses to each question in the survey template. If you choose an online platform to deliver your survey, you may be able to do some of this analysis automatically using the platform's tools. You will need to explore other pieces of information, particularly from open-ended questions, in detail to understand the local support on offer.

Then, you need to interpret your findings, which may involve comparing them to local population needs data (see: **Thinking about your local population needs assessment**), reflecting on whether they indicate a good balance of provision in your area, and considering what this implies about needs or areas for change. In the appendix, template 2, you can also find questions which will help you think about how to make sense of the information from each survey question. There is also a further table with suggestions of how to analyse and interpret specific questions to help you think about access and inclusion.

Figure 6

Survey template to support you in making sense of your information (see appendix, [template 1](#))

Suggested question to include in your survey	Questions to help you analyse the data to produce useful information	Questions and tips to help you interpret and make sense of the data
<p>6. Which format most accurately reflects the way the service or intervention is delivered? [Closed-ended]</p> <p>Example options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information or self-help • Drop-in sessions • Individual (one-to-one) format • In small groups (up to six people) • In medium groups (up to 30 people) • In large groups (more than 30 people) • Other (please specify). 	<p>How many services or interventions are delivered individually, in small groups, in medium-sized groups, and in large groups?</p> <p>Which is the most common delivery format?</p> <p>What other delivery formats are services and interventions using?</p>	<p>Is there a good combination of delivery methods and formats?</p> <p>Considering what you know about your local population needs, can the range of delivery methods meet these needs? For instance, families living in rural areas might prefer to access services and interventions virtually or online, while others might prefer to access them in person in a group.</p>

Suggested comparisons with information about the needs of the local population

Step 5: Develop your map of support for families

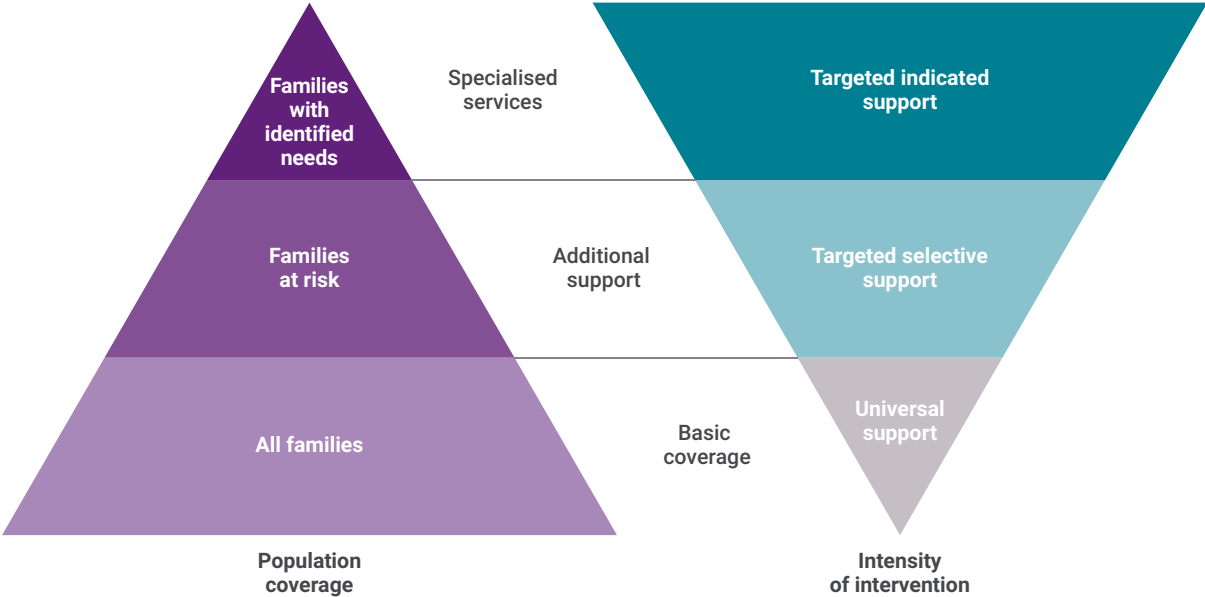
A map of support for families is a visual representation of the services and interventions available to families. Depending on the scope of your mapping exercise, you might prefer to produce different visualisations for different outcomes. For instance, you could create separate maps of the support available for positive parenting behaviours, improving perinatal and infant mental health, or promoting infant feeding.

To structure your map, you can map services and interventions against children’s ages or against target levels. There are three target levels:

- **Universal services and interventions**, which are available to all families.
- **Targeted selective services and interventions**, which offer targeted support to groups of families on the basis of broad personal or social factors that may apply to them, and mean that they are at increased risk. For example, families could be selected because they are experiencing economic hardship, include single or young parents, or are in a minority ethnic group.
- **Targeted indicated services and interventions**, which offer targeted support to a smaller group of families or children experiencing a specific, previously identified issue or diagnosed problem that means they need more intensive support.

Figure 7

Levels of need and intervention



Source: Ten steps for evaluation success, available at <https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/10-steps-for-evaluation-success>

We have produced some templates to help you create the visual map of your interventions: a family support overview, a detailed family support map, and a family support gap map (see the [appendix, templates 4, 5 and 6](#)). You can use them to visualise, for example, which interventions are designed to improve which outcome for children of what age at each of the three target levels. You can amend these templates as needed.

Figure 8

Mapping support for families (overview) (see appendix, [template 4](#))

	SERVICE / INTERVENTION TYPE (Qs 2 & 3)	KEY FEATURES (Qs 5, 6 & 7)	EXAMPLES OF SERVICES AND INTERVENTIONS (Qs 2, 3, 4 & 10)		
			ANTENATAL	0-24 MONTHS	2-5 YEARS
UNIVERSAL SUPPORT	Family hub services available to all families	<p>These are the family hub offers that all parents can have access to.</p> <p><i>Please include here the key activities identified through the analysis of your survey data</i></p>	Primary Care and community health services such as midwifery, infant feeding support and health visiting		
				Early childhood education and care – 15/30 hour per week entitlement from 2 or 3 years	
			Family hubs physical offers, <u>e.g.</u> advice for first time parents		
			Other offers through family hub or other community resources, <u>e.g.</u> drop-ins and playgroups		
	Online information, advice and & support	<p>Digital materials that offer self-help resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-help articles and blogs • Short videos • Support helplines <p><i>Please include here the key activities identified through the analysis of your survey data</i></p>	Family hub digital offer, <u>e.g.</u> advice for new or expectant parents, advice on supporting speech and language needs		
	Universal interventions	<i>Please include here the key activities identified through the analysis of your survey data</i>	Example: Family Foundations and e-Family Foundations (online): group-based co-parenting	Example: Solihull Approach (link): a universal parenting intervention for any parent with a child between the ages of 0 and 18.	

Step 6: Use your map to reflect on your support for families and take action

A balanced offer of support for families will consist of relevant interventions that are:

- aimed at improving outcomes at the universal, targeted selective and targeted indicated levels
- aimed at improving different outcomes
- available to a wide range of families (for instance, parents who are living together or are separated, minority ethnic parents, and parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities).

By analysing your map of support for families, you should get a better understanding of the current local support offers. You can use this as the basis for agreeing what a better support system would look like. We recommend you hold a workshop session with senior sponsors of the process and senior leaders and commissioners of relevant organisations – their support will be crucial once you start thinking about what changes you would like to see. Reflecting together on the support map and on ways to strengthen the support structures can help you agree on the core components of your Family Hub approach.

We have produced a template report (see [appendix, template 3](#)) that you can share with stakeholders to reflect on your findings, develop actions and plan the next steps.



PAUSE & REFLECT: YOUR MAP OF SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Here are some examples of different types of question you can ask to reflect on your map of support for families, together with examples of more specific questions for each type.

1. Considering what you know about your local population needs, is there enough support provided in the area?
 - Considering what you know about local breastfeeding rates, is there enough support for breastfeeding in the area?
 - Considering what you know about mental health among parents in the local area, are there enough services and interventions to support parents' mental health?
2. Are services and interventions available across all relevant age groups?
 - Is mental health support available to children of all ages?
3. Are all families included in services and interventions?
 - Are there enough services and interventions available for families of children with special educational needs and disabilities?
 - Are services designed to support the needs of minority ethnic families in the local area?
 - Are families across the whole geographical area able to access services and interventions?

REFLECTIONS

By following the steps in this resource, you will have strengthened your view of the services that are available to families in your local area. This will make you better prepared to develop your Family Hub approach.

You should now have a more thorough understanding of the balance of services available across the spectrum of needs. You should also now have a better understanding of who in your local population has their needs well met, and whose needs may be unmet.

- Do you feel you now have a full picture of the services available to families?

REFLECTIONS [CONT.]

- Did you encounter any surprises or different perspectives when doing your service mapping?
- What are the strengths in your current offer?
- Have you been able to identify groups whose needs are not currently met?
- Has your stakeholder workshop helped to develop a shared understanding of priorities for local commissioning?
- Were you able to build REDIE into each step in the mapping process?
- Do you have some clear next steps for developing your Family Hub approach?

Go further: Consider your next steps to deepen your understanding of support for families in your area. For example, a focus group with some of the service providers and practitioners who responded to the survey could help you to understand more about the strengths and weaknesses in your support pathway.

APPENDIX: TEMPLATES

1. Mapping support for families: collect information about existing services and interventions [\[Download\]](#)
2. Mapping support for families: make sense of your information [\[Download\]](#)
3. Mapping support for families: report template [\[Download\]](#)
4. Mapping support for families: visual templates — support overview [\[Download\]](#)
5. Mapping support for families: visual templates — detailed support map [\[Download\]](#)
6. Mapping support for families: visual templates — support gap map [\[Download\]](#)
7. Mapping support for families: workshop presentation template [\[Download\]](#)