



Start for Life Report 2026

healthwatch
Coventry

Purpose of the survey

The survey was conducted to find out how many people knew about the Start for Life programme. Whether they find the services they offer helpful. We also wanted to find out about their health and care experiences and if there was anything that they think could have been done better.

Who this report is for & how it will be used

This report has been developed in collaboration with Family Hub leads and staff to provide a clear overview of families' experiences and the services available through Start for Life. Its findings are intended to inform ongoing discussions about service delivery, highlight areas where families experience challenges, and support shared planning for improvements. While not formal recommendations, the insights presented here can guide decisions and priorities within the hubs and across Coventry's early years services. While people were waiting for one of the services, such as midwife appointments or baby weighing, we took the opportunity to ask them questions about the services and general health and care services in Coventry.

Methodology and Limitations

While this survey provides valuable insight into family experiences across the hubs, the findings should be considered within the context of its limitations. Data were collected from 42 respondents across several hubs, representing families who were attending sessions at the time. Some groups, such as younger parents or non-English speakers, may be underrepresented. Observations and feedback were collected opportunistically during visits, meaning some experiences may not have been captured. These limitations highlight areas for future engagement to ensure all voices are heard.



What we found

We attended the Baby, Bump and Beyond group; and we collected 42 responses from the different family hubs. Below is a breakdown of how many surveys were collected from each hub.

Families for All	Mosaic	Pathways	Moat	Godiva	Harmony
9	4	4	10	2	13

98% of people rated the services Good or Very Good. Overall, many of them were happy with the service and felt very satisfied with the service. However, some communication issues were raised when there were any issues that needed to be discussed regarding the child health conditions. It was apparent that there were some language barriers that were not addressed which made it difficult for the parents to understand who didn't speak English.

What we found

There are several services available for people to use such as:

- Midwifery
- Infant Feeding
- Health Visitor
- Perinatal Mental Health
- SEND
- Baby weighing
- Hospital
- Stay and Play group

The people we spoke to, spoke to us about their experiences of using these services:

Midwifery	Infant Feeding	Health Visitor	Perinatal MH	SEND	Baby weighing	Hospital	Stay and Play group
17%	9%	24%	3%	1%	24%	11%	11%

Equity and Inclusion Considerations

Families reported positive experiences with services, yet some challenges highlight potential inequalities in access or engagement.

Language barriers and limited awareness of services impacted some families' ability to fully benefit from the support available.

Similarly, safety concerns were observed in sessions where children of different ages shared spaces without adequate supervision.

Considering these issues through an equity lens helps identify opportunities to make services accessible and welcoming for all families, particularly those from diverse or vulnerable backgrounds.



Observations

- The rooms were all bright and cheerful – some purpose built for young children under two years old. Support workers speaking to mums and children, asking how they were getting on. Lovely environment for mums/dads and toddlers
- Range of toys and activities relevant to children's ages – non gendered – lots of fun opportunities for children to learn and socialise with other children,
- Opportunity for mums to have a break and speak with other mums and professionals to discuss how they were feeling and get support, whether through workers or IAPT therapies.
- The group for vulnerable parents at the Godiva Inn did not have activities for younger children and it was evidently dangerous for them with grown ups and other children walking around them.
- The baby weigh sessions were great with opportunities for mums and dads to get information about their child and their needs.

What we heard?

Yes, I am happy with all the services they had provided.

Convenient location and helpful. They don't measure height. Thinks this is just important to keep an eye on.

I think it's useful to help child with social connection.

Good so far and liking it but would like to know more and find what she can use for 13 month old

Services are good at the hub

It was really good, the nurse was very kind as well, very good, two months (check up).

Good location and good access. Used this for midwife services too when I was expecting. Vey helpful and good service

No issues - like the staff, have been coming to this hub for 7 years.

New to area, have come from elsewhere, just starting to get used to services, baby massage was really good, lady was lovely.

What we heard?

All experience has been positive, its nice, I've been bringing my baby here since she was two weeks. Best thing talking to other mums and having an adult conversation

Health visitor was keen enough, everything is okay, its good to spend one hour, baby play with others -it is good

It was good, but sometimes not so good, I still have a health visitor who comes round. I'm new here, so it is hard

Came to the stay and play session today but have used the midwifery, health visitor and baby weighing a while ago

We need more after care for new mums

Perinatal and mental health services, wouldn't go back to them, made out told me not to go to A&E but I had anaemia, they thought I was ready to be committed

Health visitor was keen enough, everything is okay, its good to spend one hour, baby play with others -it is good

I think the infant feeding team weren't very helpful, wanted to breastfeed, but didn't have enough milk, rang up they weren't very helpful.

Worried about baby's weight and wanted to know where she could get baby weighing

Concerns regarding visits

At the Women's Group, we found the services provided for immigrants and refugees housed at the hotel to be impressive, with a variety of options available to meet the needs of attendees. However, we observed significant safety concerns regarding the children present.

A volunteer had provided pens, pencils, and scissors for the children and babies, many of which were not child friendly, including sharpie pens, sharp pencils, and adult scissors. Babies were crawling with some of these items in their hands and mouths, and neither parents nor staff members were actively supervising the children. While activities for children are valuable, this highlighted a need for safer resources and better supervision to ensure their wellbeing.

Awareness –communication

During visits to the Baby and Beyond groups, we observed that many parents were not aware of the Start for Life service available to support them. Additionally, several parents were unaware that the baby weighing service is free, with some mistakenly believing they would have to pay. This indicates a gap in communication and awareness of essential services, which could be addressed to improve access and engagement for families.

Safeguarding and Safety Observations

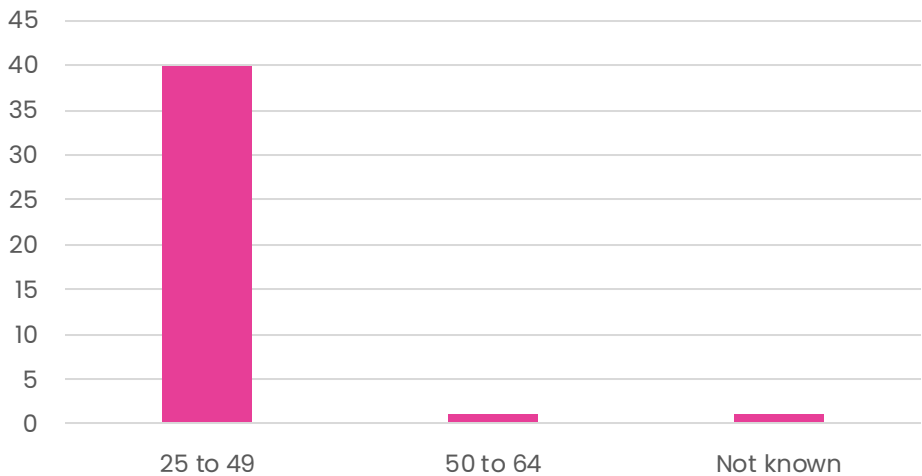
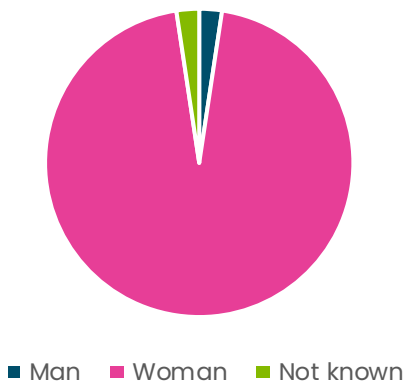
During visits, some safety concerns were identified, particularly around supervision of children and the suitability of activity resources. These observations have been shared with Family Hub lead to ensure timely attention. Any significant concerns, such as those involving potential risk to children, could then be escalated through established safeguarding procedures. This collaborative approach ensures that services remain safe and responsive to the needs of all families.



Collaborative Insights and areas for consideration

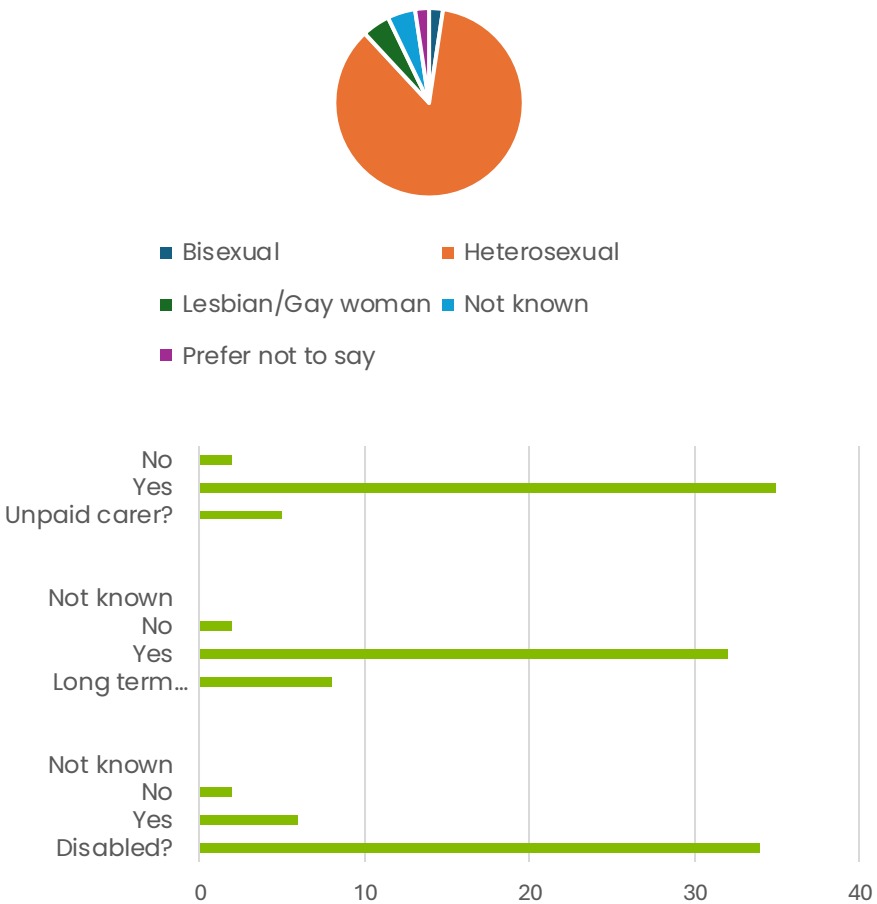
- **Increase awareness of Start for Life services** by improving verbal communication, signage, and written information, making it clear that key services such as baby weighing are free.
- **Address language barriers** by improving access to interpretation services and providing translated information to support families whose first language is not English.
- **Strengthen infant feeding support** by improving referral pathways, response times, and early access to specialist support.
- **Improve experiences of perinatal mental health services** by ensuring communication is compassionate, clear, and supportive, and by regularly reviewing service user feedback.
- **Ensure safe, age-appropriate environments** by reviewing activities, resources, and supervision arrangements, particularly in settings supporting vulnerable families.
- **Provide clearer pathways for children over the age of two**, including age-appropriate sessions and information on next-step services.
- **Increase engagement with younger parents** through targeted outreach and more accessible session options.

Demographic data



Ward	Count
Bablake	4
Binley and Willenhall	1
Cheylesmore	1
Foleshill	8
Henley	5
Holbrook	1
Longford	2
Radford	2
Sherbourne	3
St Michaels	7
Upper Stoke	1
Whoberley	3
Woodlands	3
Not known	1

Sexual Orientation



Our Thanks

To all the parents and staff across the family hubs for allowing us to speak with them and for sharing with us a glimpse of their lives and experiences.

Thanks to the managers who helped and supported us and help us on the day.

A big thank you to the Healthwatch Coventry staff and Volunteers who are crucial to make the work happen.



Mosaic Family Hub



Harmony Family Hub



Moat Family Hub

For more information

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