

OUR MISSION WALTHAM FOREST

Appendix 1: Recommissioning of the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme
and associated programmes

Supporting data and evidence – Executive summary

Public Health Team

May 2026

Executive summary

Key findings below have been drawn from the data and evidence which are outlined in a full data and insights document.

These insights form a robust evidence base to inform decisions throughout the recommissioning and procurement processes, as well as guide the development of service specifications and performance measures.

1. There are approximately 70,000 children aged 0 to 19 years in Waltham Forest including 19,000 under 5s, and 50,000 5- to 19-year-olds.
2. The under 5s population is less diverse in terms of ethnicity than the school age cohort (38% of under 5s are White British compared to 24% of those aged 5 to 19).
3. Around half of the births in Waltham Forest are to mothers born outside of the UK, of which Pakistan (8% of births in 2024) and Romania (4%) are the largest groups.
4. Birth rates have fallen by as much as 17% compared to a decade ago to about 3,800 births in 2024. Around half of the births took place at Whipps Cross Hospital (48%), and 31% at Homerton.
5. 30% of all households with children are considered overcrowded. Around 1,000 children are placed in temporary accommodation within the borough (a further 1,800 are placed outside the borough).
6. Levels of Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) are in line with London averages, but Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are significantly above average, and have been rising rapidly over the last few years. EHCPs are disproportionately higher in Black children.
7. Levels of need in social care have generally been reducing over the last few years; Looked After Children, Children and Need and Children on Child Protection Plans have also reduced compared to three years ago.
8. Levels of development in children are in line with national average at age 2, but better at age 5. At age 2, Waltham Forest children tend to have a higher proportion with good levels of communication and social development, and lower with good development of fine and gross motor skills.

Executive summary

9. Breastfeeding rates in Waltham Forest are above the national and regional average, but provisional evidence suggests that Asian and Black groups in particular may have lower breastfeeding rates and less access to or engagement with infant feeding support than other groups.
10. Obesity levels have improved over the last decade, especially relative to the rest of the country. Waltham Forest is generally below average at reception and has recently improved to being average at Year 6 (compared to historically being above average). There are still 21% of children in reception living with overweight or obesity, and 36% of children in Year 6. Levels are higher in the Black population, and lowest in the White British population.
11. Around 6,000 children in Waltham Forest (8.4%) are living with long-term health condition, including over 4,300 who have Asthma (6.2%). Children from Asian and Black ethnic backgrounds were found to have a higher prevalence of long-term conditions and rates of hospital admissions.
12. Performance on health visitor mandated checks has improved significantly across 2025. Based on most recent two quarters, there are no significant variations by ethnicity, and no geographical disparities that are consistent across different checks.
13. The health visiting service holds a caseload of around 20,000 children aged 0 to 5. Of those, around 20% (4,000) are on targeted pathway (formerly Universal Plus), and 4% (~700) on specialist pathway (formerly Universal Partnership Plus).
14. The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) service has successfully pivoted to supporting the most vulnerable young mothers, with 87 enrolments in the previous year. 40% of clients have lived away from home before their 18th birthday; 43% had a history of social care involvement. Over 30% of clients on a CIN or CP plan were removed from those plans whilst receiving support from the service.
15. The school nursing service is accessible to roughly 50,000 children in the borough. The completion of health questionnaires across all age groups remains very low. Drop ins at primary schools and special schools are well utilised and community drop ins are still being embedded.
16. Around 8,000 children under 5 were seen at a Family Hub last year. Family Hub attendance was particularly good amongst White Other populations. Proportional to population, the group that use the service least are the White British population. In the last year, Family Hub usage rose by nearly 50% in Leyton and Leytonstone; by 20% in Walthamstow and stayed constant in Chingford.