



BEST START IN LIFE: SWINDON LOCAL PLAN SUMMARY

March 2026





Our Aim

To give every child in Swindon the Best Start in Life by improving early development, reducing inequalities, and strengthening family wellbeing - focusing support where it will have the greatest impact.

1. Priority Populations



Children aged 0-5, with enhanced support for groups who may experience unequal early developmental opportunities.

Families living in high deprivation

Children experiencing poverty

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Boys

Summerborn children

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

One parent households



2. Place-Based Priority Areas



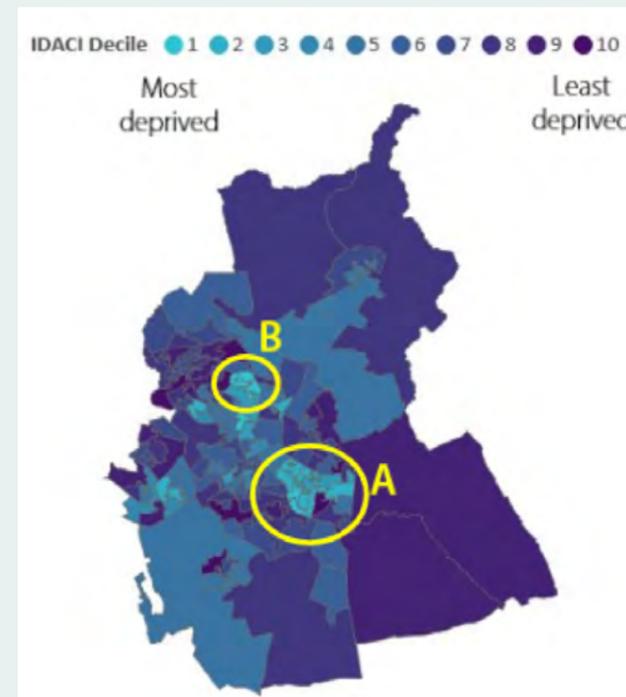
Data identifies two geographic zones where need is highest:

Swindon North –
Penhill & Upper Stratton (B)

- High deprivation
- Highest social care caseloads
- High proportion of under5s

Swindon South –
Walcot East & The Parks (A)

- Highest child poverty
- High social care involvement



Together, these zones provide high proximity of support for **52%** of neighbourhoods with greatest child income deprivation and good coverage for **78%**.



3. Child Development Priorities



Based on Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of reception year. And Ages and Stages Questionnaire.



Early Learning Domains

Early Learning Domains

- Self-regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships
- Emotional wellbeing
- Early communication and language
- Writing
- Number & numerical patterns

These areas will drive improvements in the Good Level of Development - particularly for disadvantaged children (currently **54.6%**, above national).



4. Health Priorities



Strong Areas:

- ✓ Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccination coverage age 2: 91.8%
- ✓ MMR Vaccination coverage two doses age 5: 87.1%
- ✓ Tooth decay prevalence 5-year-olds: 16.5%
- ✓ Ages and Stages Questionnaire completion: 99.2%

Priority needs (Children's Health Needs Assessment 2024):

- Social, emotional & mental health (SEMH)
- Child development & early education
- Access to nutritious food & physical activity
- Oral health (ongoing priority despite improvements)



5. Family & Parenting Priorities



(Parenting Needs Assessment 2025 + community insights)

- Poverty and cost of living pressures
- Mental health support for parents and young children
- Maternal health and Early Years support
- Early and easy access to services ("no wrong door")
- SEND navigation and early identification
- Childcare access and work-life pressures
- Cultural inclusion for migrant families
- Tackling isolation and building peer support
- Digital safety and healthy screen habits
- Stronger father engagement

6. System Priorities



(Parenting Needs Assessment 2025 + community insights)



- **Build an integrated Best Start system across health, early years, SEND, and Family Hubs**
- **Strengthen workforce capacity (trauma-informed, neuro-affirming, culturally competent practice)**
- **Use data and intelligence to target support**
- **Deliver a clear Early Years Development Pathway**
- **Ensure accessible, inclusive, culturally safe services across Swindon**





Overall Best Start in Life Priority Statement

Reduce inequalities, improve early development, and strengthen family wellbeing by targeting support where need is highest - population groups, priority places, and key developmental domains - while building an integrated, accessible system that families can navigate easily.



