

Cumberland's Start for Life Offer

Your essential guide to the support, information and advice that you can expect when you welcome a baby in Cumberland, and throughout your child's first two years of life.



Healthy development, from pregnancy onwards, requires nurturing relationships, environments and experiences. Everybody has a role to play...

Centre for Early Childhood

We all want to give our babies the best possible start in life. You may be a single, solo or co-parent, part of a same or mixed gender family, a grandparent, an adoptive or step parent: whatever your family structure is, we know that you want to support your child to thrive.

The period from the time that your baby is conceived until their second birthday is roughly 1001 days. These days are often a mixture of highs and lows, with a mixture of happiness, excitement, tiredness and overwhelm.

You can find a wide range of support and advice for you during pregnancy or your child's earliest weeks, months and years on the Cumberland Family Hubs website:

[Homepage | Cumberland Family Hubs](#)

Cumberland's Start for Life Offer describes:

- The support that you and your baby or toddler can expect to receive from services such as Midwifery, Health Visiting and Early Years and Childcare settings
- How you can find and access other activities and information for you and your family within community settings or online

Our commitment to you is that you can expect:

- A clear offer of what services and support are available for you and your baby through various stages (you can skip to the stages that are relevant to you)
- Access to helpful information when you need it (a mixture of online, telephone or face to face)
- The right help at the right time, in a way that supports the needs of everyone in the family
- Respectful people (both trained professionals and volunteers) who will listen to you and support you to parent your child so that your family can thrive
- A commitment to anti-racist and anti-oppression practices that celebrate your family's uniqueness and treats you with integrity and respect
- Opportunities to feed in your views and ideas on how services can be improved

Every child born or growing up in Cumberland can expect to receive the following support. We call this 'universal support' as it is available to ALL families.



Having your baby (Antenatal Care)



Your GP, Midwifery Service and Hospital Trust will help you, your loved one or surrogate to have a safe pregnancy and birth.

Midwives, Health Visitors and GPs are the first points of contact for new parents and provide vital support and advice.

If you are not registered with a GP in your area, you can find a GP and contact them to register here - [Find a GP - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Families are invited to attend a series of supportive routine appointments and reviews to help to keep you and your baby healthy and well, and to ensure that any difficulties are picked up as early as possible. These appointments will also provide pregnant women and people with advice on the importance of vaccinations during pregnancy.

Families living in Cumberland are served by one of the two following Health Authorities:

- **Maternity Services in North and West Cumbria - [Maternity :: North Cumbria Integrated Care \(ncic.nhs.uk\)](http://ncic.nhs.uk)**
- **Maternity Services in South Cumbria - [Maternity services :: University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust \(uhmb.nhs.uk\)](http://uhmb.nhs.uk)**

You will have access, through your Maternity service provider, to the Badger Notes app which will enable you to book appointments and view your records- [Badger Notes - Access your healthcare records](#)

Your local Midwifery Team will support you after your baby arrives – you will be contacted within the first few days to check your baby’s health and the health of parent(s) after birth, or you can contact the team with any questions you have during your baby’s early days.

Start for Life emails and information:

As soon as you know that a baby will be joining your family, prospective parents can sign up for emails from ‘NHS Better Health: Start for Life’ that are tailored to your baby’s due date or age – [Start for Life home - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Maternity Voices Partnerships bring families and professionals together to represent the voices of parents and babies, and to improve and develop maternity services further. Users of Maternity Services can join in the conversation by providing feedback and/or joining a local group:

North and West Cumbria - [West North East Cumbria Maternity Voices Partnership \(wnecumbriamvp.co.uk\)](http://wnecumbriamvp.co.uk)

South Cumbria - [LSC Integrated Care Board :: Maternity voices partnerships](#)

Registering your baby's birth

Your baby's birth needs to be registered with the registration service where they were born. This service is free of charge and by law, you must register your baby's birth within 42 days.

**Cumberland Registration service - [Book an appointment to register a birth](#)
[Cumberland Council](#)**

Email: registration.service@cumberland.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 373 3730

**Westmorland and Furness Registration service - [Book an appointment to register a birth](#)
[Westmorland and Furness Council](#)**

Email: registration.service@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 373 3300

Alternatively, you can do a declaration of a birth at any other office in England and Wales - the details will then be passed back to your local service who will do the registration and issue your certificates at a later date.



Baby and You - Keeping you and your baby healthy and well



Health Visiting Service

Health Visitors support families with children under 5, from the antenatal period (from around 28 weeks of pregnancy) onwards. The service is delivered in a range of settings including families' own homes, local community or health settings.

The Health Visiting Service currently covers the whole of Cumbria and Health Visitors provide five different reviews as follows. These may be face to face, in your home or by telephone:

- **Antenatal Visit** - this review is offered between 28 to 32 weeks of pregnancy
- **New Birth Visit** - this visit is available when your baby is between 10 and 14 days old
- **6 to 8 week visit** - you will be offered an appointment to speak with your Health Visitor
- **1 year review** - The One Year review is an opportunity to discuss your child's development and needs. You will be asked to complete two questionnaires on your child's physical development and emotional wellbeing prior to the review.
- **2 year review** - This review is an opportunity to discuss your child's development and needs between 2 and 2.5 years old. This review may be undertaken in partnership with your child's early years provider if they are attending an early years setting or Childminder.

In addition to the reviews above, if you would like to discuss any health issues or concerns for you or your baby, your local Health Visiting Team can be contacted for support and advice. This can include support with weaning, toileting, sleep, growth and development, minor ailments and more.

[Health Visiting :: North Cumbria Integrated Care \(ncic.nhs.uk\)](https://www.ncic.nhs.uk)

(covering the whole of Cumbria)

Other Health Services and Support for you and your baby:

Support and advice about feeding your baby

Your Health Visitor and Midwife have received additional training in infant feeding and are there to support you feed in the way that you want to and to make informed choices about the way that you feed. Both services also have Infant Feeding Coordinators who specialise in this area. You can also talk to the team at your local Children's Centre about this.

For additional information and details on local support networks, please follow the links below:

[Infant feeding and relationship building :: North Cumbria Integrated Care \(ncic.nhs.uk\)](https://www.ncic.nhs.uk)

There is also a National Breastfeeding Helpline which is open from 9.30am to 9.30pm every day of the year. Tel: **0300 100 0212 [National Breastfeeding Helpline – Helpline](#)**

If you are having difficulties with feeding your baby, the Health Visiting service will support you. If your baby is tongue-tied, your Health Visitor or GP are available to help.

When your baby is ready to be introduced to solid food (at around 6 months old), a lot of support and advice about weaning is available on the NHS Start for Life weaning hub - **[Weaning - Start for Life - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)**

Healthy Start Vitamins

Free vitamins are available in Cumberland to help families of young children to gain the important nutrients that support growth and development.

Vitamins for pregnant people will initially be distributed by Midwives and Health Visitors during their early visits. The vitamins are also available for those who are breastfeeding or combined feeding (breastfeeding and formula) a baby up to the age of six months, as well as for all children up to the age of two.

For further information, please speak to your Health Visitor or Midwife, or ask at your local library or Children's Centre.

Local GP surgery

Your local GP is there to support the whole family's health. When your baby is around 6-8 weeks old, you will be offered an appointment to check on your baby's health and the health of parent(s) after birth. This should include an opportunity to review parent carer's mental health and wellbeing.

Immunisations

You will usually be contacted by your GP surgery when your child is due for a vaccination. This might be by letter, text, phone call or email, or you can get in touch with your GP to book an appointment.

[NHS vaccinations and when to have them - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Contraception advice

You can get advice around contraception from your Midwife, GP or Health Visitor or for more information follow this link:

[Sexual Health :: North Cumbria Integrated Care \(ncic.nhs.uk\)](#)

Dentist

You can start to brush your baby's teeth as soon as they start to come through using a baby toothbrush with a tiny smear of family fluoride toothpaste. NHS dental treatment for children is free (but not all dentists will take on new NHS patients). You can register your baby with a dentist even before their teeth come through:

[How to find an NHS dentist - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Pharmacies

Your local chemist or pharmacy is a good place to get advice about minor illnesses for you and your family:

[Find a pharmacy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Baby and You - playing and exploring

Playing with your baby

Babies are very responsive to familiar voices, even from before they are born, and love hearing their close family and caregivers talk and sing. Shortly after your baby is born, they will enjoy looking at your face and start focusing on other objects too. At every age, they will enjoy hearing you read and will respond to your gentle encouragement to explore, play and use their natural curiosity.

There are lots of ideas online for playing with your baby from very early on, for example - [Children's language development and parenting advice - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)

Here are some ideas for places where you can go together to help build your baby's confidence and have fun together:

Libraries

Libraries are welcoming places for families to go. You can visit your local library to find information and to borrow books. It is free to register your baby or toddler for a library card which will enable you to borrow age-appropriate books to take home and enjoy together. Some libraries run story and singing sessions and other events, and many have baby changing facilities:

[Libraries and archives | Cumberland Council](#)

Parent, baby and toddler groups in the community

There are lots of local, community groups across Cumberland where you can go with your baby or toddler. This enables your child to socialise with others and is an opportunity for you to meet other parents and carers for informal support. They are also great places to help you to support your child's learning and development.



For information on groups in your local area, including those run in Children's Centres, please contact Children and Families Information Service:

Tel: 03457 125 737

Email: childrens.information@cumberland.gov.uk

Facebook - [Children and Families Information Service | Facebook](#)

Active Babies and Toddlers

Babies and toddlers love moving and are constantly discovering the amazing things that their bodies can do. They love being supported to become active and this boosts both their physical health and their brain development. Here are some activities that you can do together from the start:

[Movement_for_Babies_2023_Version.pdf \(activecumbria.org\)](#)

[Movement_for_Toddlers_2023_Version.pdf \(activecumbria.org\)](#)

The Hiking Household provide lots of ideas and inspiration for family friendly walks in Cumbria, including pram friendly routes - [The Hiking Household | Family Friendly Walks | Cumbria](#)

Child Safety and preventing accidents

As babies start to roll, crawl and move around, we need to be increasingly vigilant about safety in the home and while out and about. Lots of information about child safety can be found here:

[Child Safety and Prevention | Cumberland Family Hub](#)



Choosing childcare

Finding the right care for your baby or young child is really important. If you would like some advice or support in finding childcare then please contact Cumbria Children and Families Information Service on **03457 125 737** or email childrens.information@cumberland.gov.uk

The team can also provide a brokerage service and contact providers on your behalf to help you find suitable childcare.

Funded childcare places currently start from the term after your child turns two years (eligibility criteria apply) however this is due to expand to babies within the next year. Please see the Childcare Choices website for more information - [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](#)

In order to apply for a funded place for when your child turns two years old, please speak to your Health Visitor or other Early Years Professional, or apply online:

[Cumberland - Families Information | Free Childcare for 2 Year Olds \(cumberland.gov.uk\)](#)

Extra support when you need it

Family life can be difficult and there will be times when you or members of your family need support in addition to the universal services above: it is important that you know who can help you. We want you and your family to be able to find and receive extra help as early on as possible.

Here is some of the help that is available:

The 0 – 19 Child and Family Support Service run groups for babies, young children and families that are open to all, as well as activities and advice when you are needing extra support:

[Families Information | What is a Children Centre? \(cumberland.gov.uk\)](#)

Your wellbeing

If you are worried about your emotional health as a parent during pregnancy or early parenthood, and feel as if you are experiencing more bad days than good, you can receive support from your local perinatal mental health service - please speak with your Midwife or Health Visitor about this:

- North Cumbria - [Perinatal Community Mental Health Team \(North Cumbria\) - CNTW256 - Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- South Cumbria - [Perinatal mental health | Maternity Resource Hub](#)



The Happy Mums Foundation are a local organisation that support and promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of mothers in Cumbria - [The Happy Mums Foundation | Mental Health Peer Support for Mums](#)

PANDAS Foundation are an online community that offer online support and a helpline for those affected by perinatal mental illness - [Home – PANDAS Foundation UK](#)

Family Action provide a perinatal support service for women and partner experiencing anxiety anytime from pregnancy until the baby is one year old - [0-19 Child and Family Support Service - Family Action \(family-action.org.uk\)](#)

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

If your child has a disability or you are starting to notice signs that their development may be delayed in some way, you and your child can expect to receive support from professionals with the right skills and expertise. Please talk to your Health Visitor or another early years professional to discuss your children's development and the different pathways of support that are available. You can also have a look on the SEND Local Offer website for further information and sources of support:

[Families Information | An introduction to Cumberland's SEND Local Offer](#)

SEND Alliance Cumbria (SENDAC) is the official Parent Carer forum for parents and carers of children with additional needs and disabilities in Cumbria. SENDAC reaches out and listen to families concerns and opinions about SEND services and together as an equal partner with the NHS and Local Authority, work to shape and improve what is available

[Home - SENDAC Home Page](#)

The SEND, Information and Advice Service (SENDIAS) will listen to any concerns that families of children with additional needs have, and offer support, impartial information and advice to empower and equip you on processes and your rights.

[Families Information | Contact a Local Support Group \(cumberland.gov.uk\)](#)

Financial support

Many people are experiencing challenges related to the cost of living and having a young family can place extra pressure on your finances. It is important to ask for help as early as possible - there are many organisations that want to help and where you can receive advice and support:

The Focus Family Team in your Local Authority includes advisers who offer a full welfare benefit check to make sure that families are receiving all the benefits that you are entitled to, as well as suggesting local services that you can access such as community food hubs:

[Focus Family | Cumberland Council](#)

Eligible families of young children can receive financial help with the cost of food and milk via [Cumbria Healthy Start scheme | Cumbria County Council](#)

More 'cost of living' support is available here:

[Cost of Living Support | Cumberland Council](#)

Refugees

Article 22 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that 'Children and young people have the right to special protection and help if they are a refugee (someone who has been forced to flee their own country because of persecution, war, or violence).

All professionals and volunteers who are working with families from refugee, asylum seeking or forced migration backgrounds, need to be aware that it is likely that they have experienced traumatic events. As a result particularly sensitive approaches will need to be adopted.

Refugees in Cumberland are supported by the Local Authority Resettlement Programme and through a number of Third Sector organisations that help to provide a warm welcome to families:

[Carlisle Refugee Action Group](#)

[Home - Carlisle City of Sanctuary](#)

[West Cumbria Refugee Support Network](#)

i Cumbria comprises the two local authority areas of Cumberland, and Westmorland and Furness.

ii Children's Centres are run as part of the 0 – 19 Child and Family Support Service offer [Families Information | What is a Children Centre? \(cumberland.gov.uk\)](#)

