

Our manifesto 2024

Spurgeons is a national charity which transforms the nation, one child at a time, by ensuring every family has the support needed to flourish. During 2022/23, we helped 30,500 families, children, young people and adults*, and two million people heard our voice through online, media and other streams outside our physical services. We deliver services in a post-pandemic landscape where children have missed out on opportunities to flourish and the cost of living crisis now impacts our most vulnerable families even more.

The election

As we approach the General Election on July 4th, all political leaders should recognise that they need to act now to address the problems facing too many children and families in this nation. We must see greater investment in services and digital resources so that children and young people are not left waiting for support, parents are equipped to help their children flourish and all families can become resilient, and further strengthened through local networks and wider community.

Spurgeons' family hubs





We deliver family hubs, in centres commissioned by local authorities, in churches, in prisons, in schools, wherever we are needed. Welcoming and accessible, family hubs are places where all families can get help and advice when they need it. Our family hubs address the major challenges of family life through support with parenting, mental health, special educational needs and domestic abuse.

We have welcomed the Department for Education's family hubs implementation. A long overdue investment in babies, infants and their families. The funding has enabled over half of the upper tier local authorities to establish the foundations of a family hub model. However, the vision and ambition for family hubs must build on what has been started to ensure that all families in this generation and the next can benefit.

*This does not include services closed during the year.



We make the following recommendations:

-  Recent investment in family hubs, which builds on the legacy of Sure Start children's centres, must continue. All upper tier local authorities must create local family hub networks, where families with challenges get the help they need and all families can access resources and support. Cross-sector partnerships can facilitate access, connection and relationship.
-  Extending the offer from families with children aged 0-5 years to 0-19 years (and to 25 for children with SEND) must be achieved, because problems can occur at any time through the course of childhood. Without the right help at the right time, the negative impact on children can be long lasting and prevent them from developing resilience and independence.
-  Voluntary, community and faith sector organisations, which are embedded in and trusted by local communities, need to be encouraged and equipped to deliver family hubs. Whether directly commissioned by local authorities or welcomed into the local family hub network, these family hubs will sustainably engage with and support disadvantaged families which public sector providers can struggle to reach.
-  Investment in local authority digital transformation needs to be implemented at pace to increase efficiency, cost effectiveness and capacity. Digital resources and functionality are not only vital in helping all children get the best start for life, whether via infant feeding videos or appointment and activity booking services, but are also fundamental to enabling residents to access wider council services and information, such as enhancing enquiry handling and bill payment.

Spurgeons core services in family hubs

Through family hubs, we deliver a range of services to ensure children and families receive the help they need. The four core categories of our support are:

- mental health
- family life and parenting
- special educational needs
- domestic abuse



Mental health counselling for children, young people and parents

We support children, young people, parents and carers through one-to-one counselling either face to face or remotely nationwide, working in schools, children's centres and family hubs.

It's no secret that young people's mental health is in crisis and we need to resolve this fast. In 2022, 18% of children aged 7 to 16 years had a probable mental disorder. Early intervention is the solution; provision of accessible, expert counselling for children and young people in school, through sustained, ring-fenced funding, will enable children and young people to receive help more quickly and effectively.

Family well-being

All parents find family life challenging at one point or another. At Spurgeons we work with families at every level of need, whether delivering one to one support to a parent facing complex difficulties. We also train local volunteers to run courses to inform and equip parents in their community.

In most families where children are struggling, equipping parents to work together to overcome challenges achieves better outcomes for the whole family. We need to create a cultural shift where receiving parenting support is seen as a welcomed rite of passage for all parents as their children grow up. We need a national agenda to deliver parenting programmes in every school, in every community, so that all families can benefit.

Special educational needs

We support children with SEND and their families including those waiting for diagnosis. Our support is available online and in Birmingham, Elmbridge, Wiltshire, Kent, East Sussex and West Sussex.

The places where we work are no exception to the national trend of increasing numbers of children on Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP). Latest figures from the Department for Education show 517,000 children and young people were on an EHCP in 2023 – the highest on record.



Families are waiting too long for assessments and, even once a plan is in place, the support for children and their parents is inadequate. The system is not working and must change. The Education Health and Care Plan process is in need of urgent reform and provision within mainstream settings must be increased and improved.

Domestic abuse

We work with people who are survivors of domestic abuse across our settings; at Spurgeons we have staff who are alert to the signs of abuse, skilled in broaching the subject and highly experienced at helping survivors recover and rebuild their lives.

We recognise that identifying and responding to situations of domestic abuse are crucial wherever we deliver services, but we can only make a real difference if everyone working with families is equally vigilant. We need political leadership to ensure that all service providers in health, social care, criminal and family justice, education, housing as well as family hubs work together to end domestic abuse.

Spurgeons' impact

- ♥ 98% of service users in 2022-23 would recommend us to friends and families
- ♥ More than 95% of families accessing our services tell us that things have improved from working with us
- ♥ 97% of families make progress across their lives when working alongside us and 63% of families have improved well-being.
- ♥ Parents report that their emotional health and parenting confidence increase by over 70%
- ♥ 64% of children and young people receiving counselling experience a meaningful positive change

