Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Creating a better start for London

Improving school readiness
Creating a better start for London

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Aims



The purpose of this report is to:

- describe the importance of school readiness
- describe the economic case for investing in school readiness
- provide a descriptive analysis of school readiness in London
- summarise the evidence of what works to improve school readiness in order to facilitate improvements in service planning and delivery

What is school readiness?

School readiness is a measure of how prepared a child is to succeed in school cognitively, socially and emotionally. The good level of development (GLD) is used to assess school readiness. Children are defined as having reached a GLD at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage if they achieved at least the expected level in the early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language) and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy

Area of learning	Early learning goal
Communication and language	Listening and attention; Understanding; Speaking
Physical development	Moving and handling; Health and self-care
Personal, social and emotional development	Self-confidence and self-awareness; Managing feelings and behaviour; Making relationships
Literacy	Reading; Writing
Mathematics	Numbers; Shape, space and measures
Understanding the world	People and communities; The world; Technology
Expressive arts, designing and making	Exploring and using media and materials; Being imaginative

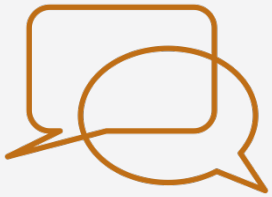
Department for Education (2014) *Early years foundation stage profile attainment by pupil characteristics, England 2014*

The importance of school readiness

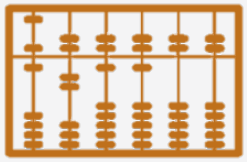
School readiness starts at birth with the support of parents and caregivers, when young children acquire the social and emotional skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and life

School readiness at age five has a strong impact on future educational attainment and life chances

Children who don't achieve a good level of development aged 5 years struggle with:

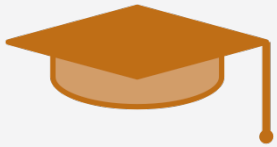

Social skills


Reading


Maths


Physical skills

which impacts on outcomes in childhood and later life:


Educational outcomes


Crime


Health


Death

What school-ready children look like

- Recognise numbers and quantities in the everyday environment
- Participate in music activities such as singing
- Have good oral health
- Are able to take turns, sit, listen and play
- Are able to communicate their needs and have a good vocabulary
- Are able to socialise with peers and form friendships
- Are independent in eating
- Develop motor control and balance for a range of physical activities
- Are independent in getting dressed and going to the toilet



- Have received all childhood immunisations
- Are well nourished and within normal weight for height

Milestones of normal child development aged about four years (based on the work of Mary Sheridan, From Birth to Five Years)

Why invest in school readiness?

Failing to invest sufficiently in quality early care and education short changes taxpayers because the return on investment is greater than many other economic development options



Every **£1** invested in quality early care and education **saves** taxpayers up to **£13** in future costs



For every **£1** spent on early years education, **£7** has to be spent to have the same impact in adolescence



The benefits associated with the introduction of the literacy hour in the UK outstrip the costs by a ratio of between **27:1** and **70:1**

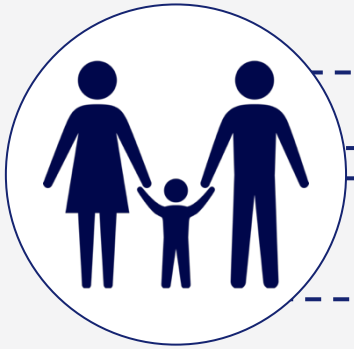


Targeted parenting programmes to prevent conduct disorders pay back **£8** over six years for every **£1** invested with savings to the NHS, education and criminal justice system

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (2013) *The impact of early education as a strategy in countering socioeconomic disadvantage*
DCSF (2008) *The impact of parental involvement on children's education*
Public Health England (2013) *The health and wellbeing of children and young people in London*

Why invest in school readiness?

Early years interventions have been shown to have a higher rate of return per investment than later interventions. The costs of delivery per child are outweighed by the benefits to the individual, taxpayers and others through improved educational outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, reduced crime and increased taxes paid due to increased earnings as adults

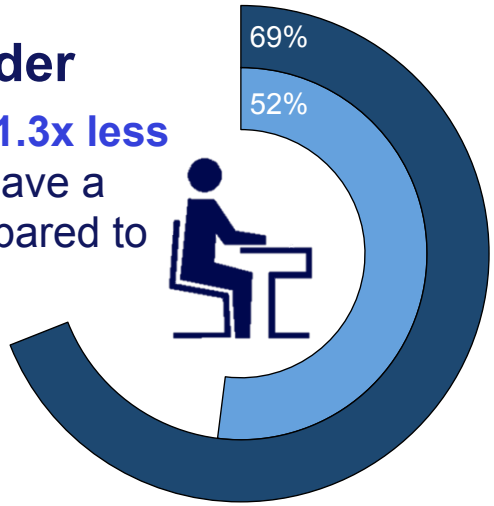


	Cost	Benefit	Benefit to cost ratio
Curiosity corner	£78	£5,466	70.08
Family nurse partnership	£7,562	£14,694	1.94
Early childhood education	£6,141	£11,525	1.88
Perry preschool programme	£13,393	£21,598	1.61

Inequalities in school readiness (2013/14)

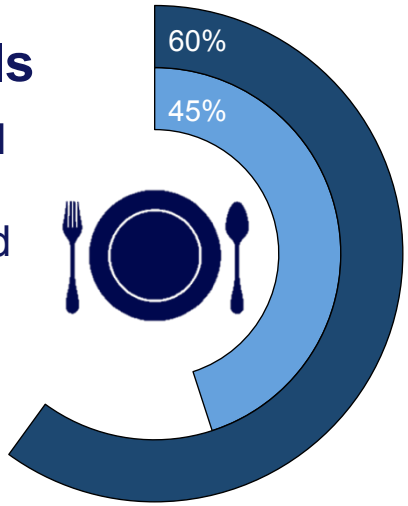
Gender

Boys are **1.3x less likely** to have a GLD compared to girls



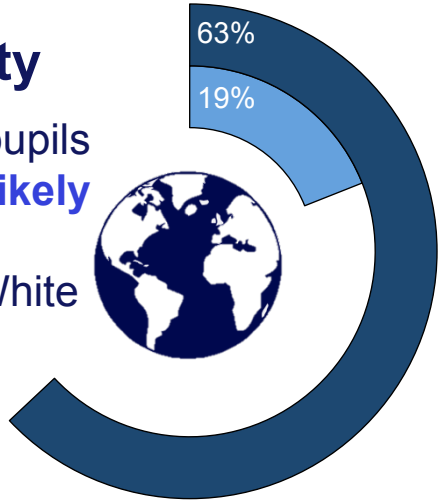
Free school meals

Pupils eligible for FSM are **1.3x less likely** to have a GLD compared to those who are not eligible for FSM



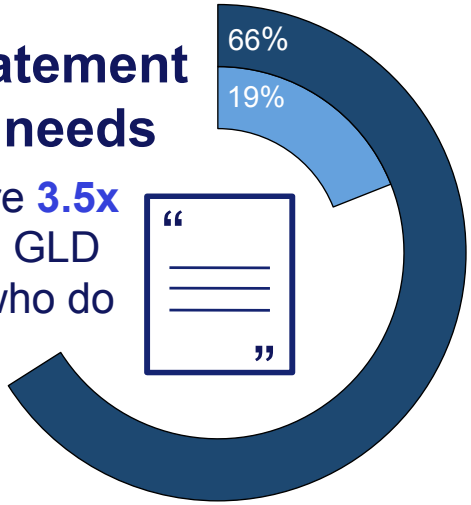
Ethnicity

Gypsy/Roma pupils are **3.3x less likely** to have a GLD compared to White British pupils



Pupils with a statement of educational needs

Pupils with a SEN are **3.5x less likely** to have a GLD compared to those who do not have a SEN



Department for Education (2014) *Early years foundation stage profile attainment by pupil characteristics, England 2014*

Indicators of school readiness in London

Ready families + Ready children + Ready communities + Ready services
= *Children ready for school success*

Ready families	Ready children	Ready communities	Ready services
Family homelessness per 1,000 households (2012/13)	Eligible pupils in nurseries and primary schools claiming FSM (2014)	Children living in poverty (2012)	3 and 4 year-olds benefitting from funded early education (2014)
1.7 / 3.6	16.5% / 19.9%	19.2% / 23.7%	97% / 92%
Under 18 conceptions per 1,000 females aged 15-17 years (2013)	Low birth weight of term babies (2012)	Overcrowding from 2005/06 – 2007/08	MMR for 1 dose at 2 years (2013/14)
24.3 / 21.8	2.8% / 3.1%	2.7% / 6.8%	92.7% / 87.5%

England London

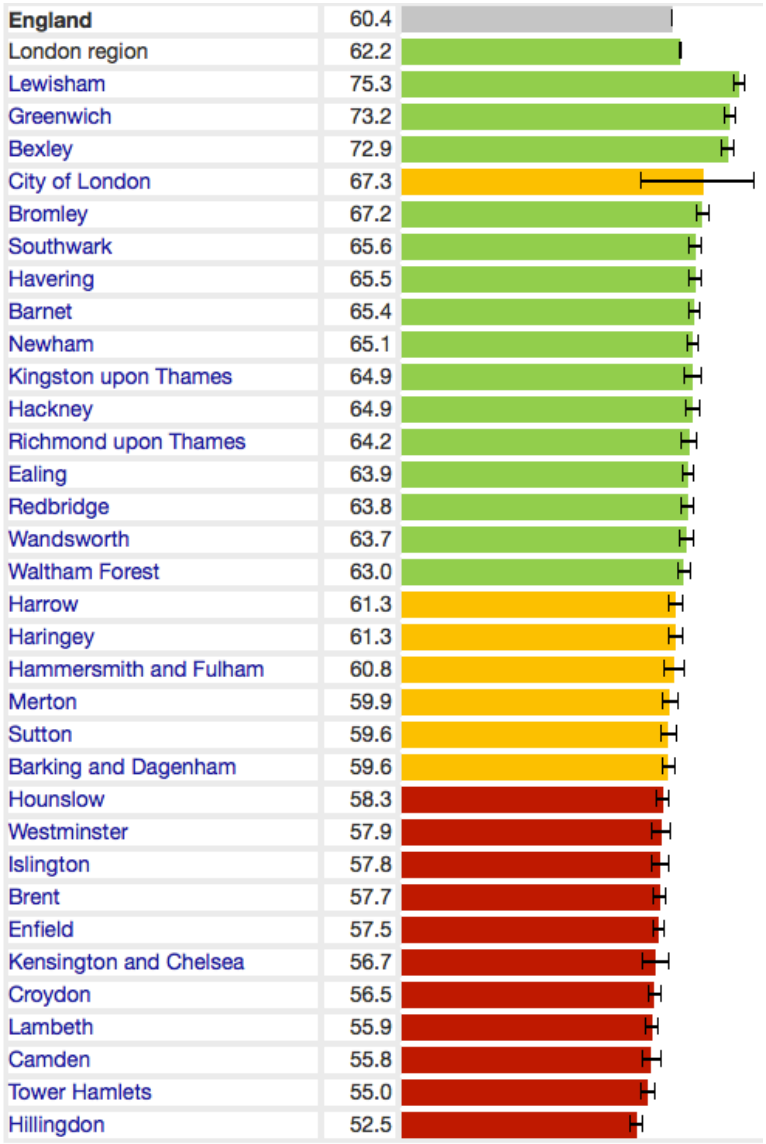
www.fingertips.phe.org.uk and gettingready.org
Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) *Live tables on household characteristics*
Department for Education (2014) *Provision for children under five years of age*
Department for Education (2015) *School children and their characteristics*

School readiness in London in 2013/14

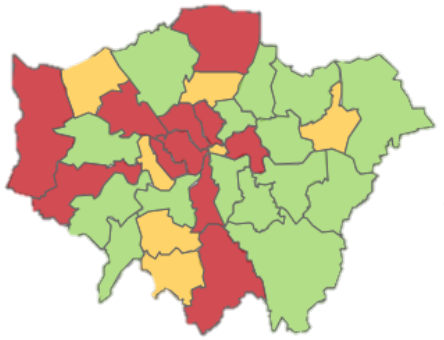
In 2013/14, **39,500** five year-olds living in London **did not** achieve a good level of development aged five years, that's about **2 in 5** children

There is a wide variation in the proportion of children who are school ready across London

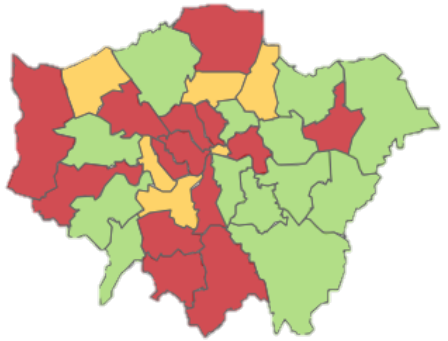
In **Hillingdon** about **1 in 2** children are school ready compared to **Lewisham** where about **3 in 4** children are school ready



Compared to England



Compared to London



Compared to benchmark

Better | Similar | Worse

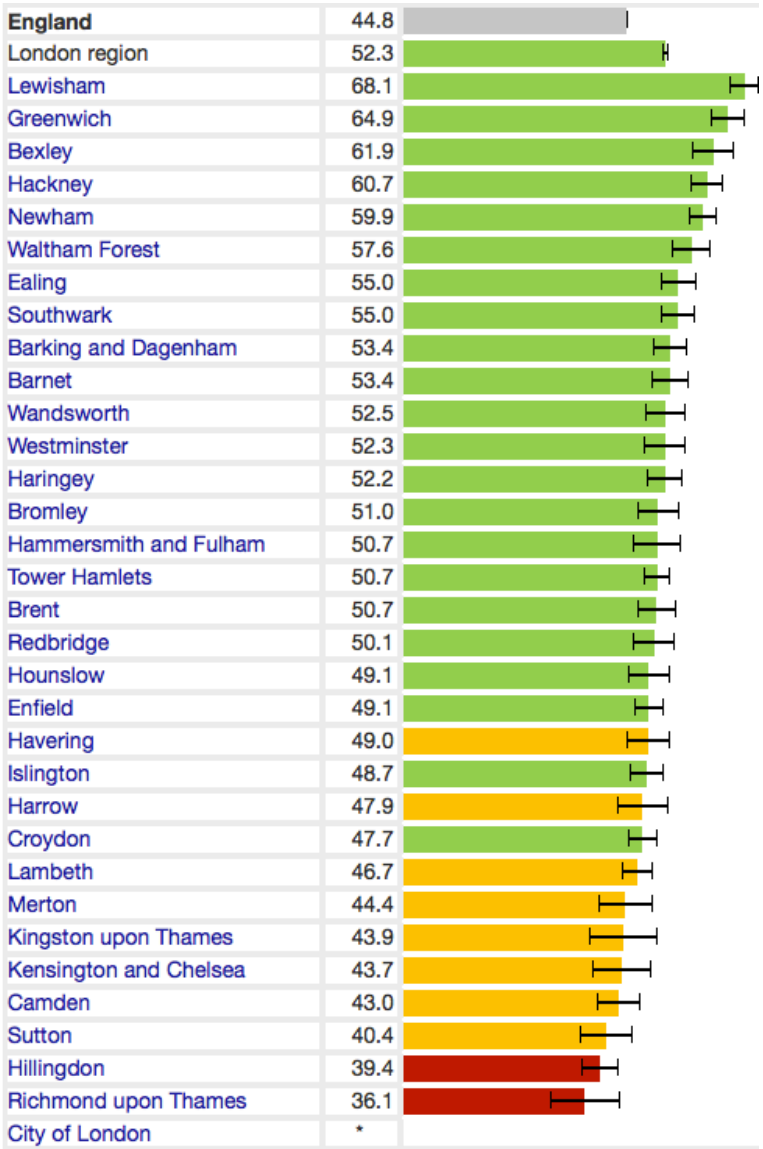
Source: www.fingertips.phe.org.uk

School readiness in London in 2013/14

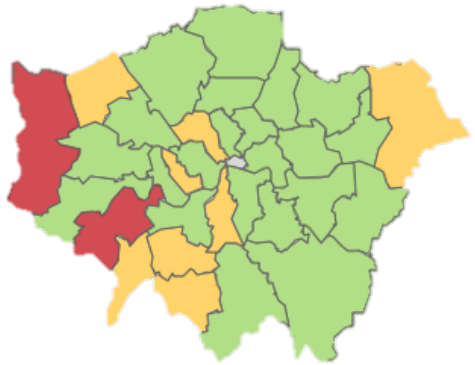
In 2013/14, **10,052** of 21,085 five year-olds receiving free school meals (FSM) living in London **did not** achieve a good level of development aged five years, that's about **1 in 2** children

There is a wide variation in the proportion of children receiving FSM who are school ready across London

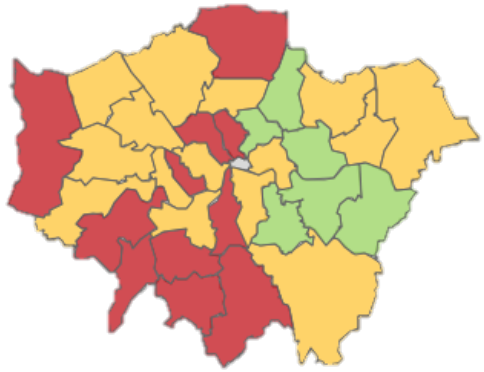
In **Richmond upon Thames** just over **1 in 3** children are school ready compared to **Lewisham** where just under **7 in 10** children are school ready



Compared to England



Compared to London



Compared to benchmark



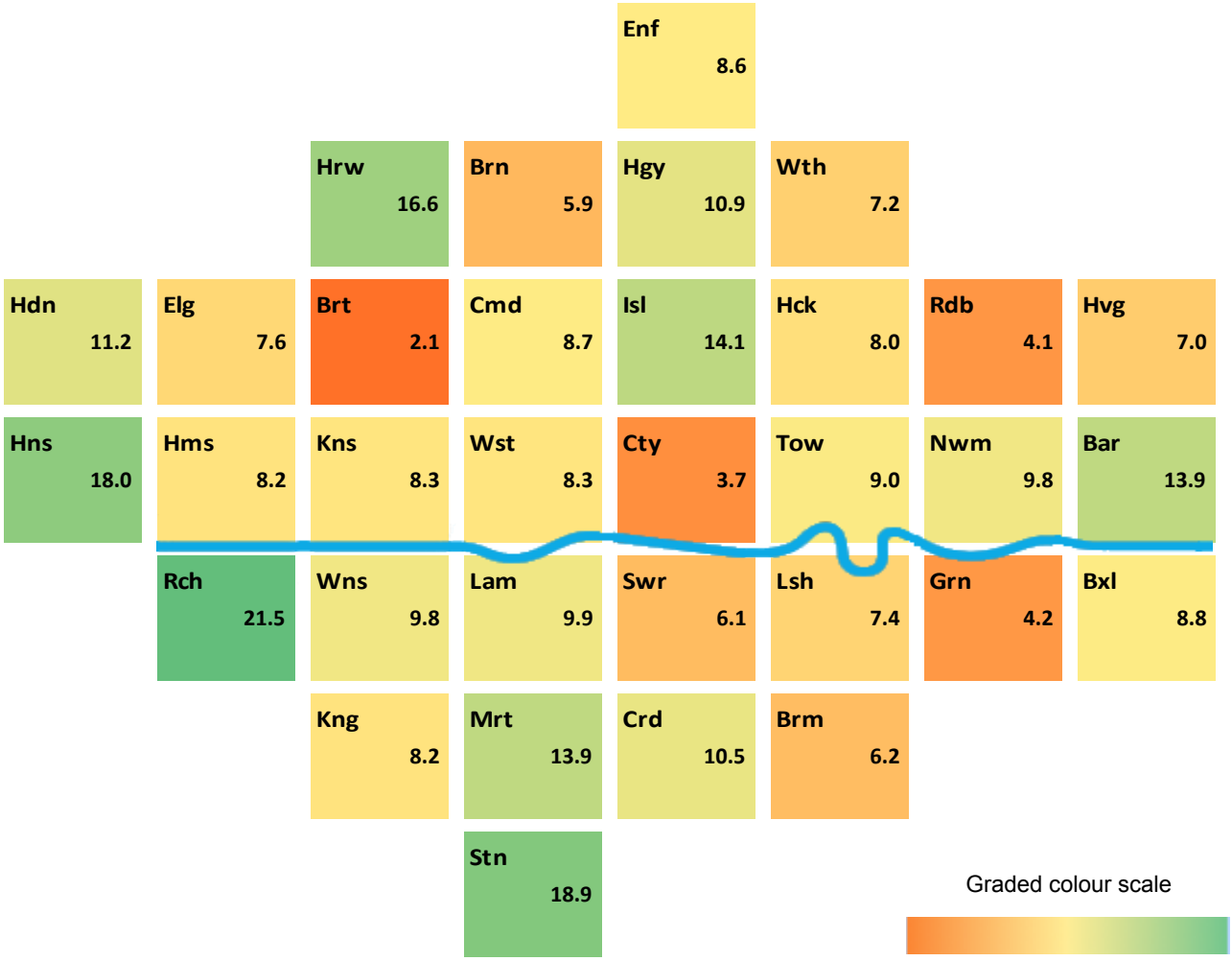
Source: www.fingertips.phe.org.uk

Trends in school readiness in London

Percentage point difference in school readiness between 2012/13 and 2013/14

School readiness **improved** in all London boroughs between 2012/13 and 2013/14

The biggest increases were seen in Richmond upon Thames (21.5 percentage points), Sutton (18.9 percentage points), Hounslow (18.0 percentage points) and Harrow (16.6 percentage points)



Source: www.fingertips.phe.org.uk

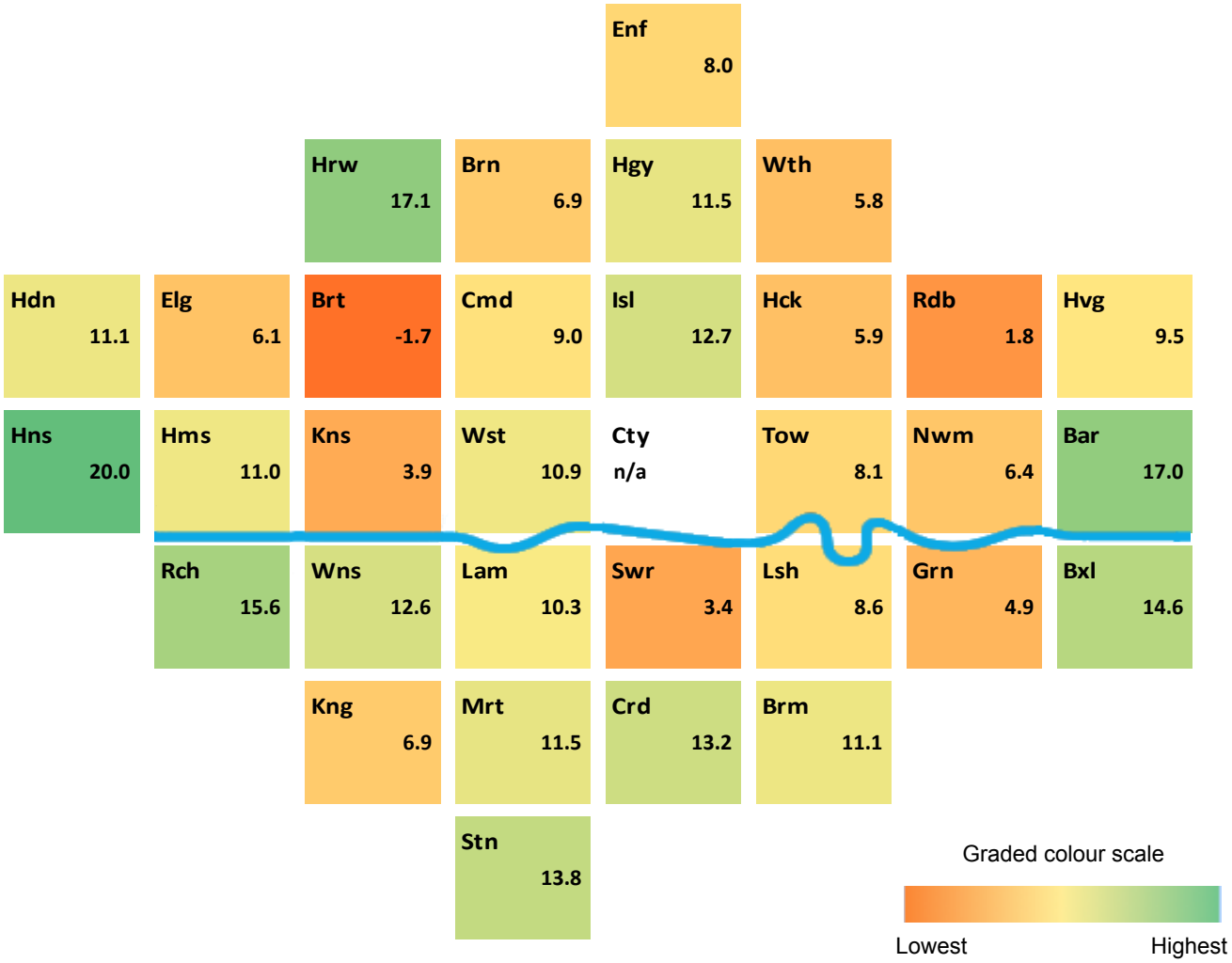
Trends in school readiness in London

Percentage point difference in school readiness in children receiving free school meals between 2012/13 and 2013/14

School readiness for children receiving free school meals **improved in 31/33** London boroughs between 2012/13 and 2013/14

The biggest increases were seen in Hounslow (20.0 percentage points), Harrow (17.1 percentage points) and Barking and Dagenham (17.0 percentage points)

School readiness decreased by 1.7 percentage points in Brent



Source: www.fingertips.phe.org.uk

What works to improve school readiness?



- good maternal mental health
- learning activities, including speaking to your baby and reading with your child
- enhancing physical activity
- parenting support programmes
- high-quality early education

Department of Education, Department of Health (2011) *Families in the foundation years evidence pack*

Maternal mental health and school readiness

One of the **strongest** predictors of wellbeing in early years is the mental health and wellbeing of the mother or caregiver



1 in 10 women

will suffer from a perinatal mental illness, that's about 13,400 new mothers in London

5x

Children of mothers with mental ill-health are **five times** more likely to have mental health problems themselves

Impact of maternal depression on school readiness

- Behaviour problems
- Impaired parent child attachment
- Emotional problems
- Conduct disorders
- Language development delay
- Learning difficulties

Actions to reduce maternal depression include

- Development of a shared vision and plan
- Effective screening and referral to services
- Family strengthening and support
- Increased public awareness

Greater London Authority (2014) *London mental health: The invisible costs of mental ill health*
Department of Education, Department of Health (2011) *Families in the foundation years evidence pack*
Children's Defense Fund Minnesota (2011) *Maternal depression and early childhood*

Learning activities and school readiness

A child's communication environment is a **more dominant predictor** of early language than their social background



By the **age of 3** children from low income families have:

- heard on average **30 million fewer words** than children in high income families
- **half the vocabulary** of children in high income families

Language proficiency is a **key predictor** of school success

61% of low income children have no books at home

1 in 4 children leave primary school without reading well

this rises to

2 in 5 poorer children leave primary school without reading well

£23 billion

If all children were reading well by age 11, GDP in England in 2020 could be an extra £23 billion

Actions to improve a child's communication include

1. Research

Social marketing to identify current practices and potential cultural barriers

2. Develop

Development of a strategic plan, including development and dissemination of resources

3. Implement

Dissemination of information to reach the community using existing structures

4. Evaluate

This should include short-term process measures and agreed long-term outcome measures

Betty Hart and Todd Risley Meaningful differences in the every day experiences of young American children (Baltimore MD: Paul; H.Brookes, 1995)
Leffel K, Suskin D *Seminars in Speech and Language* 2013;34:4 Parent-directed approaches to enrich the early language environments of children living in poverty
Hammer C (2012) NCT *Research overview: Parent-child communication is important from birth*
Save the Children (2014) *Read on get on: How reading can help children escape poverty*
OECD (2012) *Lets read them a story! The parent factor in education*
State Government of Victoria (2014) *Parenting support strategy*

Enhancing physical activity and school readiness

Physical activity for young children is an **important** component of early brain development and learning

Movement skills such as eye skills and manipulative skills help children access curricular activities with **enjoyment and success**. Communication skills **depend** on well developed physical skills



1 in 10 children

aged 2–4 meet the CMO guidelines of being physically active daily for **at least 180 minutes (3 hours)**, spread throughout the day

Benefits of physical activity include:



Helps develop coordination and movement skills



Promotes healthy weight



Strengthens developing muscles and bones



Helps children develop social skills

Actions to promote physical activity in early years include



Plan and develop

Develop initiatives which target adults who interact with children in the early years



Work with parents and carers

Provide information on the importance of physical activity and what counts as physical activity



Work with early years settings

Integrate physical activity into the daily routine when planning activities

Department of Health (2011) *Start Active, Stay Active A report on physical activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers*
Cabinet Office (2014) *Physical activity Olympic and Paralympic legacy for the Nation*
British Heart Foundation National Centre (BHFNC) for Physical Activity and Health, Loughborough University (2015) *Early years: Practical strategies for promoting physical activity*

Parenting support programmes and school readiness

Parenting has a **bigger influence** on a child's life chances in the early years than education, wealth or class

Effective, warm, authoritative **parenting** gives children confidence, stimulates brain development and the capacity to learn



2 in 5 children
miss out on 'good' parenting

Supporting parents with parenting programmes has a **positive impact** on both parents' and children's wellbeing and mental health and is an **important** part of prevention and early intervention

Impact of parenting support programmes on school readiness

Benefits of the **Family Nurse Partnership** include **better**:

- language development
- vocabulary and mental processing
- emotional development
- attention and behaviour

Benefits of **early family training/parenting support** include **improved**:

- numeracy skills
- vocabulary
- letter identification
- emergent writing skills
- parent-child interaction

Actions to improve parenting support programmes include

Understand parent's needs and how to engage them

Intervene early to maximise impact and reduce longer-term costs

Increase the **accessibility** of programmes

Ensure **better integration** and **co-ordination** of parenting support services

Improve the **quality** and build the **evidence base** for support services

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) *State of the Nation 2014: Social mobility and child poverty in Great Britain*
Department of Education, Department of Health (2011) *Families in the foundation years evidence pack*
Department of Education and Skills (2004) *What works in parenting support? A review of the international evidence*
Health Equity Evidence Review 1 (2014) *Good quality parenting programmes and the home to school transition*

High-quality early education and school readiness

By the **age of five** the brain forms as many as

700

neural connections per second

High-quality early years education **significantly improves** child health and educational outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children

2.5 x

The average **economic benefit** of early education programmes for low income 3 and 4 year-olds is nearly **2.5 times** the investment

20-50%

If all low income children received high-quality early education the gap in achievement could be closed by as much as **20-50%**

Impact of high-quality early education



Improved school readiness



Improved future academic attainment



Improved future productivity



Higher levels of employment



Less involvement in crime

Actions to improve high-quality early education include

Systems development

- continued and increasing investment
- integrated services
- workforce training

Structural development

- favourable staff to child ratios
- encouragement of parents to support and engage more actively
- focus on cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning

Process development

- adoption of more responsive and nurturing staff: child relationships
- work towards an equal balance of child and adult initiated activity

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (2014) *Early years literature review,* Centre for Research in Early Childhood (2013) *The impact of early education as a strategy in countering socio-economic disadvantage*
http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/interactive_features/five-numbers/
Aos S, Lieb R et al Benefits and costs of early prevention and early intervention programmes for youth. Olympia , Washington State Institute for Public Policy 2004
Department for Education (2007) *Effective pre-school and primary education 3-11 project (EPPE 3-11): Influences on children's development and progress in Key Stage 2: Social / behavioural outcomes in Year 5*
Gorey M *School Psychology Quarterly* 2001;16(1):9-30 Early childhood education: A meta-analytic affirmation of the short and long-term benefits of educational opportunity

Useful resources

- www.beststart.org
- http://www.eif.org.uk
- http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html
- www.literacytrust.org.uk
- www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk
- www.wordsforlife.co.uk

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following individuals for their comments on the report:

- Professor Viv Bennett, Director of Nursing, PHE
- Alison Burton, Maternity and Early Years Lead, PHE
- Eustace DeSousa, National Lead - Children, Young People and Families, PHE
- Dr Yvonne Doyle, Regional Director, PHE London
- Lucy Fordham, Press Officer, PHE London
- Denise McCoy, Principle Knowledge Transfer Facilitator, London Knowledge and Intelligence Team, PHE
- Liz Prosser, Healthy Schools London Manager, Greater London Authority

Picture credits

- Piggy-bank by Maico Amorim from the Noun Project
- Team by Stephen Borengasser from the Noun Project
- School by Chris Cole from the Noun Project
- London by Dreams Icon from the Noun Project
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Published August 2015
PHE publications gateway number: 2015238