



The  
Pathway  
Fund

10 Years of Supporting Young Children

# Impact Report

2025/26



Department of  
**Education**  
[www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)

**early years**  
the organisation for young children

# The Pathway Fund

Funded by Department of Education and administered by Early Years - the organisation for young children.



- **Three Funding Streams:**
  - Streams A and B support registered providers or facilitators of Early Years (0-4)
  - Stream C supports registered childminders and Approved Home Childcarers



- Invested £5.86 million
- 217 projects delivered by Early Years providers
- 659 Childminders/AHCs supported
- 15,405 children benefitting

# Outcomes of The Pathway Fund

In support of the Department of Education's vision  
"Every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding"  
the outcomes of The Pathway Fund are:

1

Improved development of  
children who are at risk of  
not reaching their full  
educational potential

An enhanced, more  
sustainable Early Years  
sector

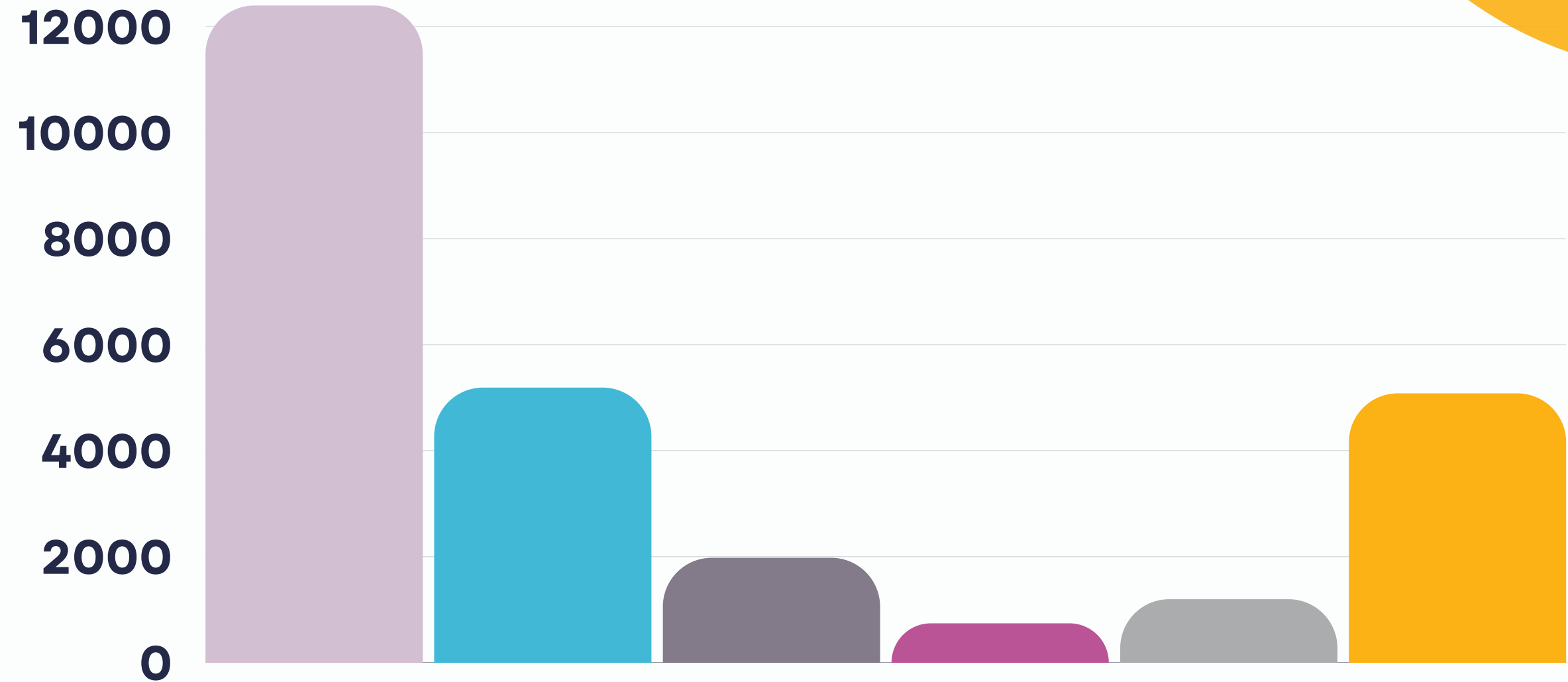
2



# Children benefitting

STREAM A AND B

Improved development of children who are at risk of not reaching their full educational potential



Total number of children\*

Children from areas of social disadvantage

Children with additional needs

Children from Minority Ethnic background

Children at risk of harm

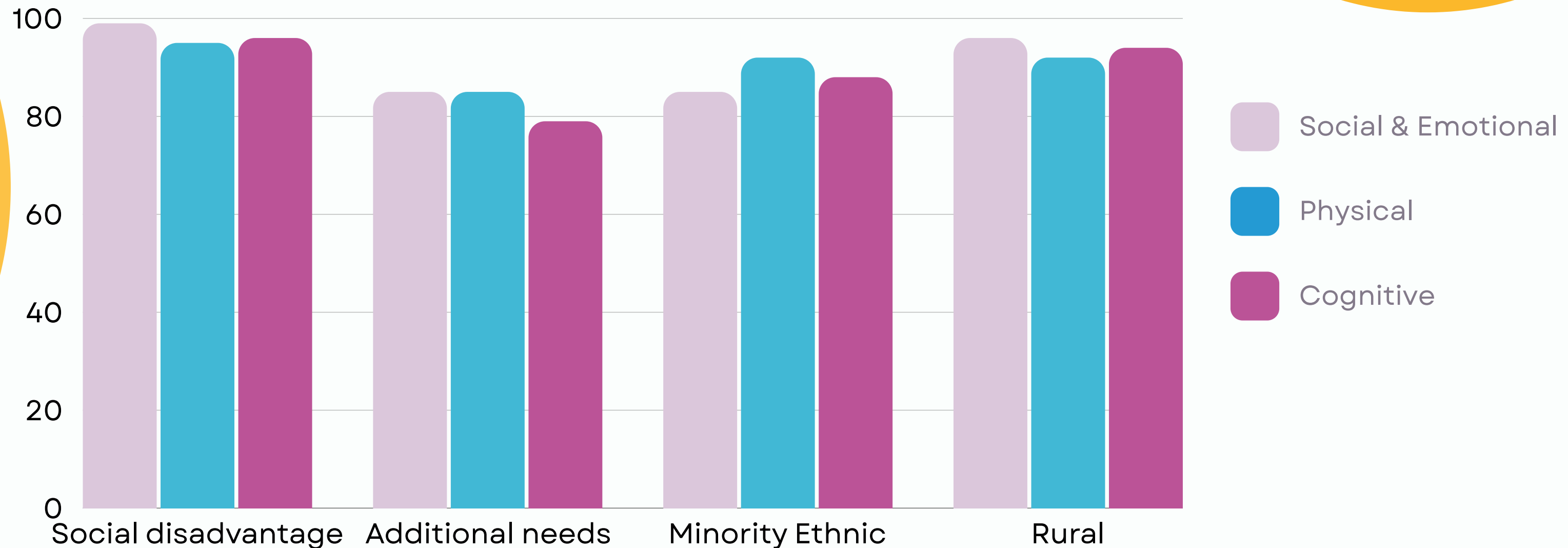
Children from rural areas

\*Children may be included in more than one category

# Children's Development

STREAM A AND B

Percentage of children making good developmental progress



Improved development of children who are at risk of not reaching their full educational potential

£2.41 million invested in 82 projects working in the top 25% most disadvantaged areas

£1.85 million invested in 86 early years settings in rural locations

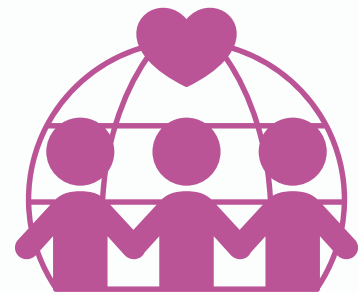
# Building Community Relations

STREAM A AND B

Improved development of children who are at risk of not reaching their full educational potential

156

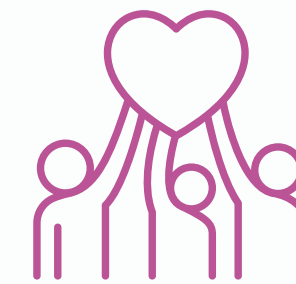
Projects delivered community relations activities



94% of projects rated these activities as having a positive impact on children's attitudes to people from different backgrounds

9675

Children participated in community relations activities



94% of projects responded these activities had a positive impact on children's attitudes to inclusion

# Parental engagement

STREAM A AND B

Improved development of children who are at risk of not reaching their full educational potential

94%

Projects reported funding enhanced parental engagement

96%

Projects reported engagement had a positive impact on parents' knowledge of child development

98%

Projects reported engagement had a positive impact on parents' confidence

88%

Projects reported engagement had a positive impact on parents' reading activities with their child

94%

Projects reported engagement had a positive impact on parents' play activities with their child

# Governance & Leadership

STREAM A AND B

Delivery of training and bespoke 1 to 1 support for management committees and Early Years staff

- 23 Training sessions
- 316 Training participants
- 17, 1 to 1 clinics
- 90 Governance queries answered

90% Responded training was very useful in managing the setting

87% Responded training was very useful in helping participants understand their role

88% Responded training was very useful in improving policies and procedures

**An enhanced, more sustainable Early Years sector**

# Training and Development

STREAM A AND B

Investment in training and qualifications for Early Years practitioners.

72

Completed additional needs training

15

Achieved a level 5 professional qualification in Children, Care, Learning and Development

42

Practitioners completed courses to deliver evidence based programmes

89%

Responded staff are better able to support children at risk from harm

90%

Responded staff were better able to identify additional needs

**An enhanced, more sustainable Early Years sector**



# Impact of Investment

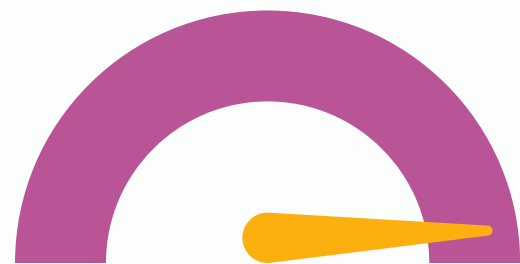
STREAM A AND B



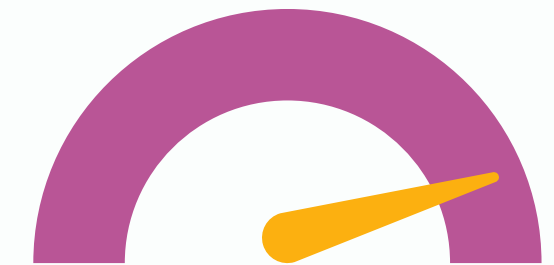
94% Said funding had a positive impact on **development** of the setting



80% Said funding had a positive impact on the **management committee**



93% Said funding increased opportunities for **physical activities**



90% Said the setting was better able to **support individual needs**

# Childminders/AHCs\*

STREAM C

Improved development of children and an enhanced, more sustainable Early Years sector

659

Childminders/AHCs received award

3005

Children benefitted

£500

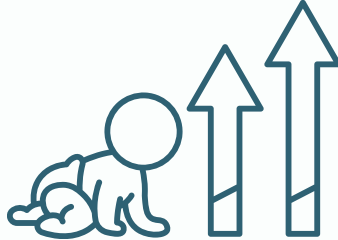
Maximum funding award

130

Attended professional training via their Pathway Fund training award



Supported Childminders/AHCs across all 18 constituencies



Benefitted children across different age groups, from 0 to 4 years of age

\*Approved Home Childcarers



The  
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10 Years of Supporting Young Children

**Contact: [thepathwayfund@early-years.org](mailto:thepathwayfund@early-years.org)**  
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