

# Best Start Family Hub – Site Selection Data Analysis Report

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May 2026

## 1. Executive Summary

This report provides the evidence which has informed our recommendation for the preferred location of the Best Start Family Hub (BSFH) in North Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Ludlow. It is based on;

- National guidance on Best Start Family Hub implementation.
- Shropshire wide deprivation data, population wide deprivation data, and education outcomes.
- Local data on Good Level of Development (GLD) and Free School Meals (FSM's)
- Mapping of 0–4 population distribution, IDACI, and IMD 2025 datasets.

It is the convergence of multiple factors, rather than any single dataset, that identifies North Shrewsbury (Sundorne in particular), Oswestry and Ludlow as the most appropriate and evidence-based location for a Best Start Family Hub pilot site.

These areas demonstrate the highest density of child poverty, the greatest overlap of disadvantage, and the strongest alignment with national requirements, ensuring that early intervention can have the greatest possible impact.

On this basis, Sundorne has been recommended as the pilot site for the North Shrewsbury Best Start in Life Family Hub, providing the most robust, evidence based and strategically justified location to deliver meaningful and sustained improvements for children and families.

In addition to the North Shrewsbury pilot, there is a strategic ambition to develop further Best Start Family Hubs in Ludlow and Oswestry. Both areas contain LLSOAs within the most deprived 30% nationally and demonstrate clear indicators of need, including relatively high proportions of children aged 0–4. They also act as central service locations for surrounding rural communities that include additional LLSOAs within the most deprived 30%, strengthening their suitability for future hub development and outreach delivery.

## 2. National Policy Expectations for Site Selection

The Best Start Family Hubs – Preparing for implementation in 2026 guidance requires that, at least 70% of BSFHs should be located in the most deprived 30% areas nationally, measured using Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index Data.

Sites should enable:

- Delivery of universal and targeted 0–5 support
- Strong outreach
- Accessibility for disadvantaged families
- Alignment with GLD improvement goals
- Use of consistent Best Start in Life branding

This selection process therefore prioritises areas where family need, deprivation, early years population, and school readiness outcomes converge.

### 3.1 Deprivation and Child Income Poverty

#### North Shrewsbury

The Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 (IMD) shows that the most deprived LLSOAs in Shropshire are E01028957 located in Harlescott Electoral Division (ED) and E01028967 located in Monkmoor ED. These are both in decile 1, the 10% most deprived LLSOAs nationally. These areas are both in the Northern Shrewsbury area.

There are a further two LLSOAs located in or towards the North of Shrewsbury, E01028983 (Sundorne and Old Heath ED), E01028934 (Castlefields and Ditherington ED) and E01028962 (Meole ED). These are in Decile 2.

#### Oswestry

In Oswestry, multiple LLSOAs fall within Decile 2, placing them within the most deprived 30% nationally. In total 6 electoral districts in Oswestry sit within the top 50% most deprived LSOAs. Selattyn and Gobowen electoral LSOA (E01028912) which sits outside Oswestry falls within decile 2.

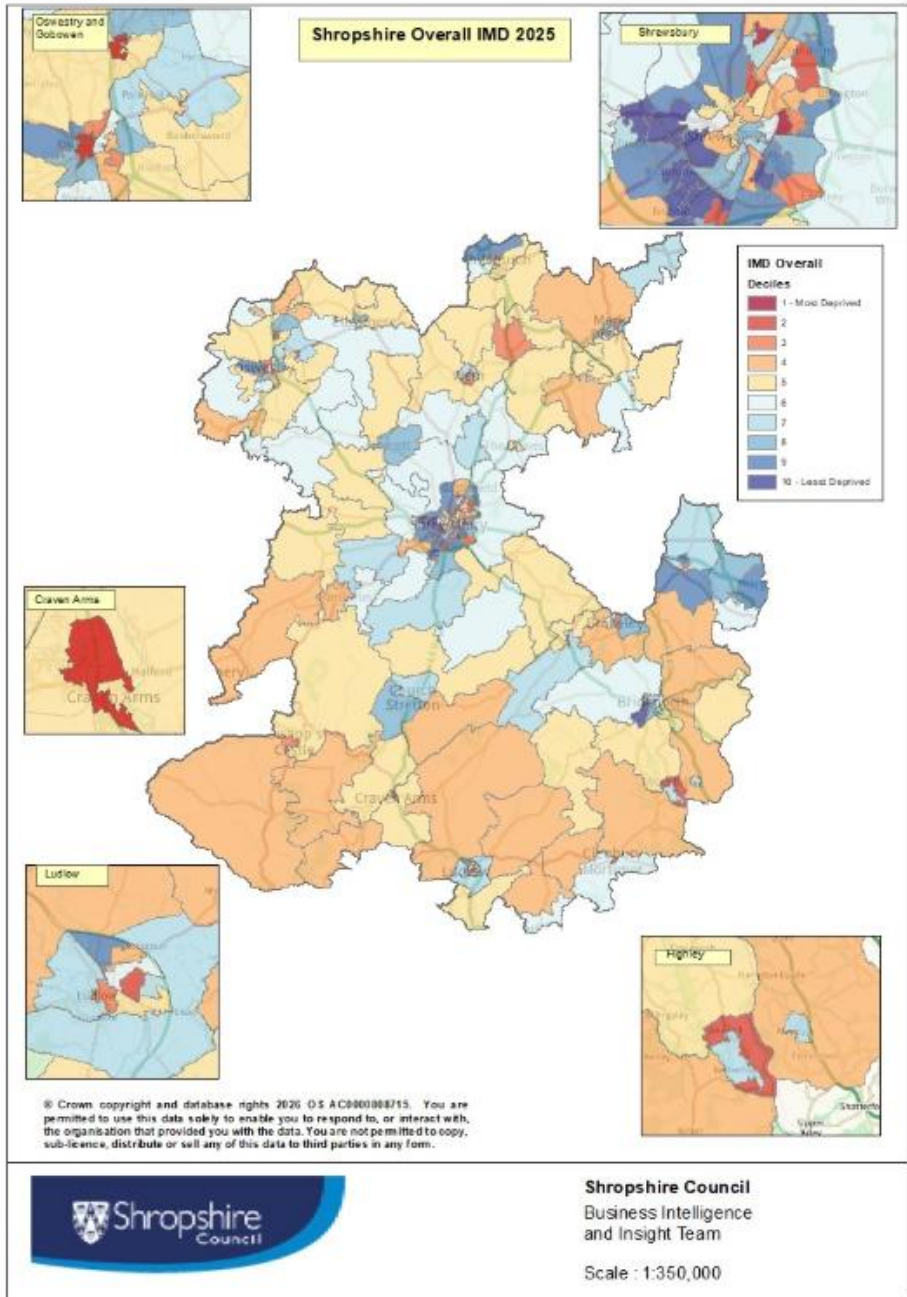
#### Ludlow

Although one electoral division in Ludlow (Ludlow East) falls within the top 20% most deprived LSOA'S, further electoral divisions including Ludlow North (E01033526) sits just outside the top 20% (decile 3). 5 electoral districts in Ludlow sit within the top 50% most deprived LSOAs.

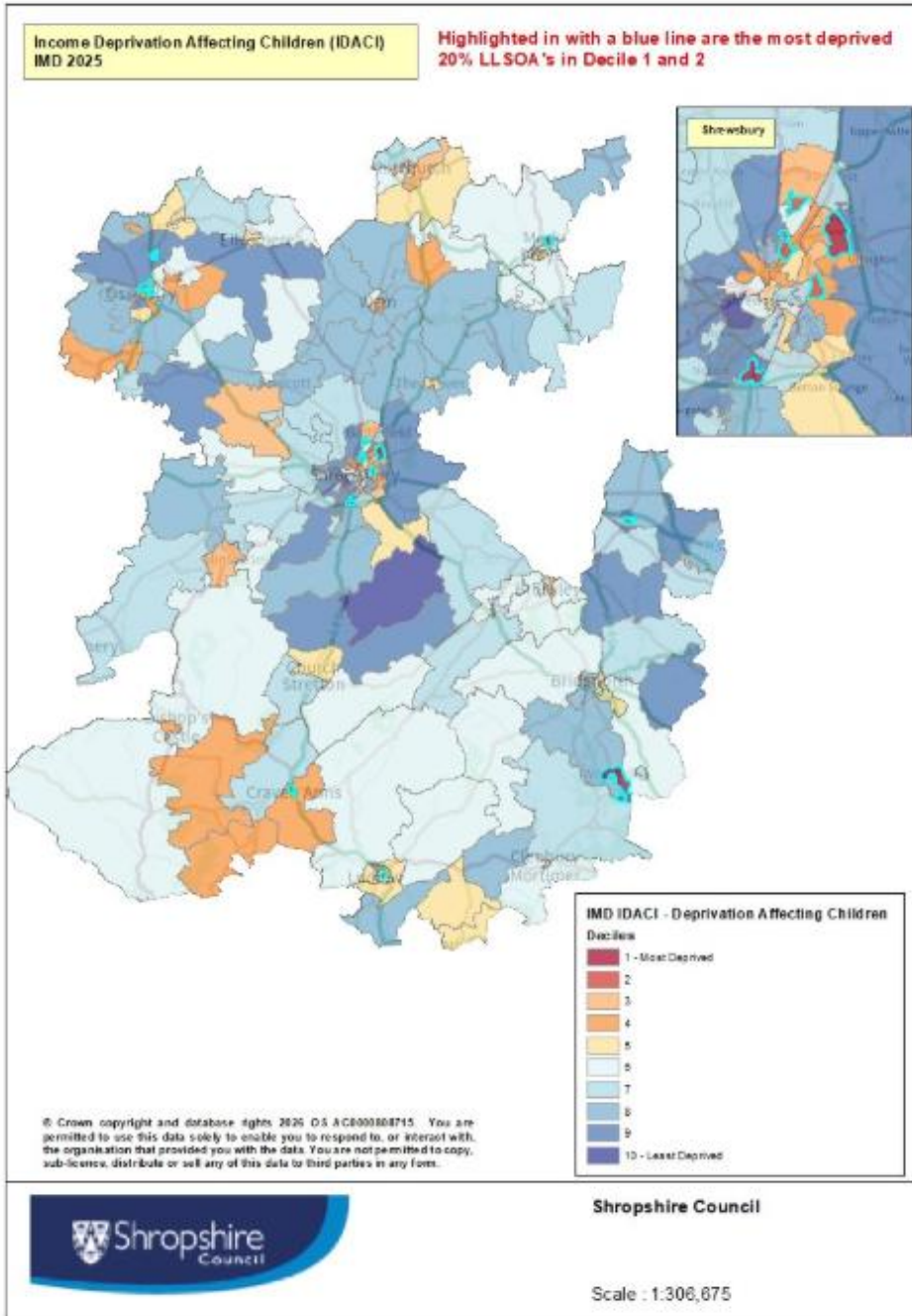
Craven Arms (E01029014) and Cleobury Mortimer electoral division (E01029002) represent two additional LSOAs in the top 30% most deprived nationally. Their locations on either side of Ludlow place the town at a central point for accessing support services.

**Table: Top 20% most deprived LSOAs in Shropshire Overall IMD 2025 National Decile**

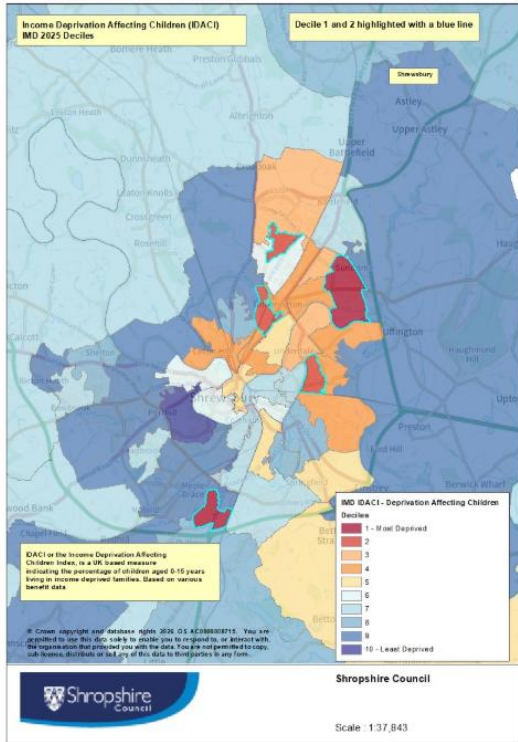
LLSOA	Electoral Division	Decile	Town
<b>E01028957</b>	Harlescott	1	Shrewsbury
<b>E01028967</b>	Monkmoor	1	Shrewsbury
<b>E01028983</b>	Sundorne and Old Heath	2	Shrewsbury
<b>E01028934</b>	Castlefields and Ditherington	2	Shrewsbury
<b>E01028962</b>	Meole	2	Shrewsbury
<b>E01028912</b>	Selattyn and Gobowen	2	Oswestry
<b>E01028906</b>	Oswestry South	2	Oswestry
<b>E01028908</b>	Oswestry North	2	Oswestry
<b>E01029007</b>	Ludlow East	2	Ludlow
<b>E01028849</b>	Highley	2	Highley
<b>E01029014</b>	Craven Arms	2	Craven Arms



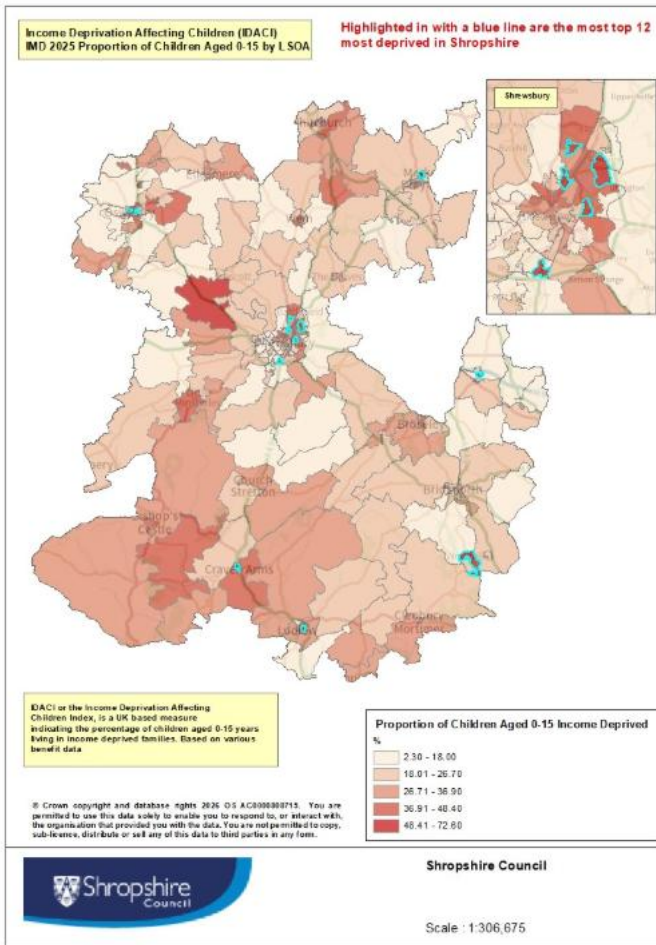
**Map; Shropshire Overall IMD 2025**



**Map: (Above) Shropshire Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) IMD 2025**



**Map; (Right) Shrewsbury Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) IMD 2025**



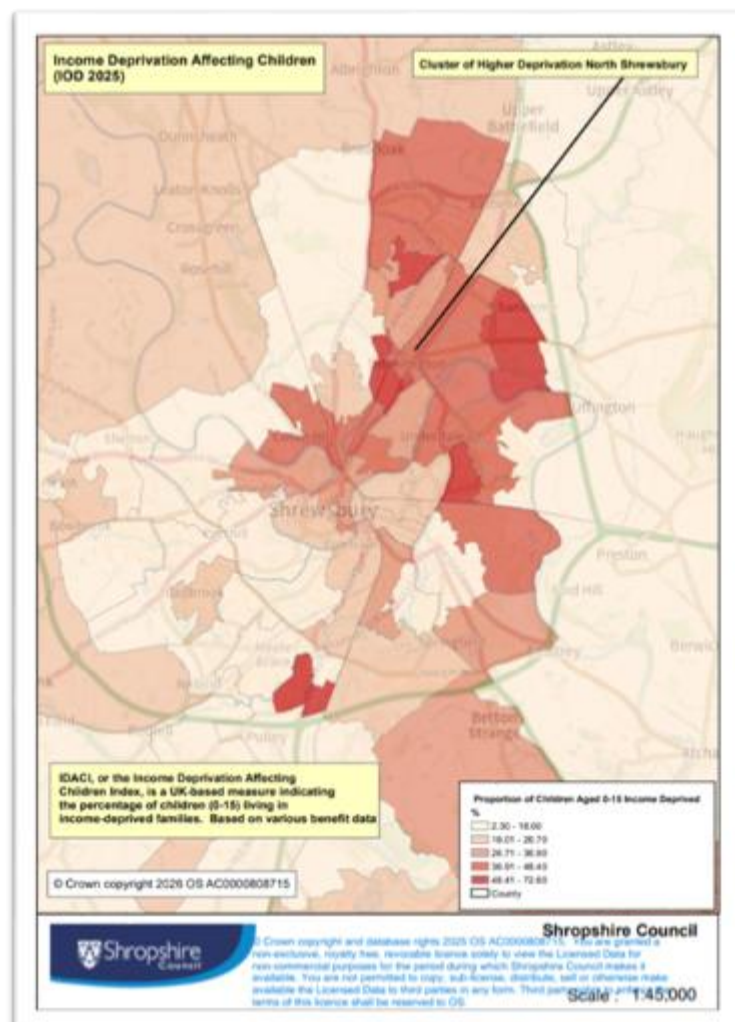
**Map; (Left) Shropshire Income Deprivation affecting children (IDACI) Proportion of children aged 0-15 by LLSOA**

The table below shows the most % of children income deprived Electoral Divisions in Shropshire for the IDACI.

Electoral Ward	IDACI % of Children Income Deprived
Sundorne & Old Heath	54.61%
Harlescott	49.28%
Oswestry North	46.38%
Highley	42.54%
Monkmoor	41.67%
Oswestry North East	41.62%
Craven Arms	41.03%
Castlefields & Ditherington	40.46%
Ludlow East	39.37%
Oswestry South East	38.23%

**Map; (Right) Shrewsbury  
Income Deprivation**

**Affecting Children (IOD  
2025)**



When looking at the IDACI score (see maps above) this shows the proportion of children (aged 0-15) who are income deprived.

### **North Shrewsbury**

The map shows the top 12 most deprived LLSOAs in Shropshire, 3 of these are in North Shrewsbury and one is in Monkmoor, Shrewsbury. These areas have 48% or more of children deemed as income deprived.

What distinguishes North Shrewsbury is the contiguous cluster of both Decile 1 and Decile 2 LLSOAs, as most of the LLSOAs in North Shrewsbury are in Decile 1, 2 or 3 in the IDACI. This area also has a large cluster of LLSOAs with the highest proportion/population of children living in income deprived households. This creates a wider geography of disadvantage affecting children and the most concentrated in Shropshire.

### **Oswestry**

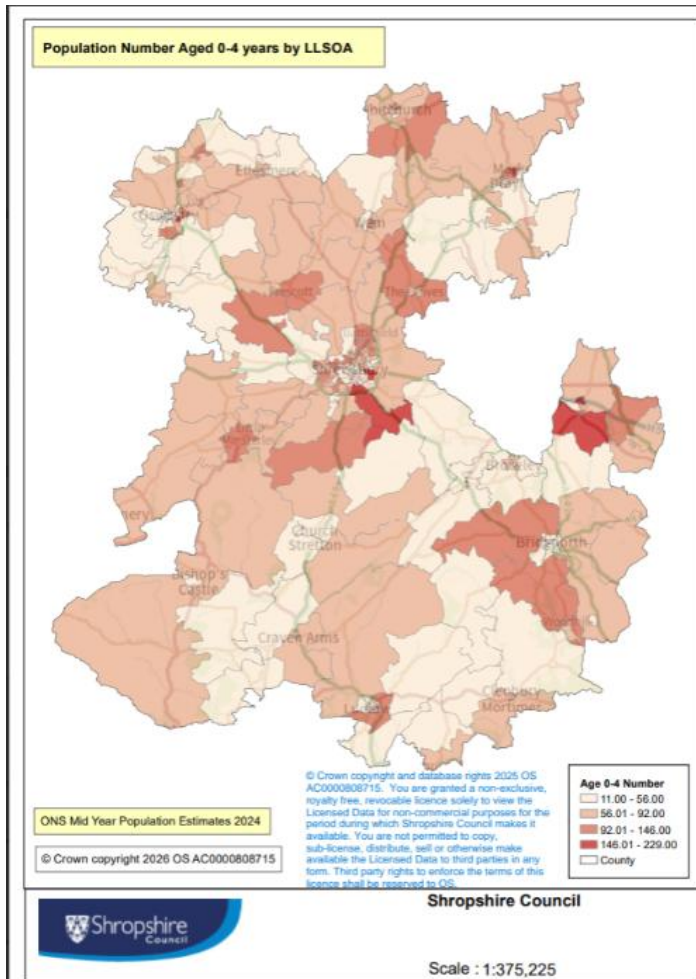
In addition, three of the LSOAs are located in Oswestry (Oswestry North, Oswestry South East, and Oswestry North East), where over 38% of children are considered income deprived. All electoral divisions in Oswestry fall within the top 50% of areas for income deprivation affecting children. In Oswestry North (E01028908 and E01028903), data indicates that more than 48% of children aged 0–4 live in relatively low-income families.

### **Ludlow**

Ludlow East closely follows, with 39% of children considered income deprived. In addition, five out of the seven electoral divisions in Ludlow fall within the top 50% of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). Data indicates that in Ludlow East (E01029007) and Ludlow North (E01033526), over 40% of children are from relatively low-income families. This compares with the neighbouring LSOA of Craven Arms electoral division, which is within the top 30% most deprived nationally, where approximately 26% of children are from relatively low-income families.

## **3.2 Early Years Population Distribution (0–4s)**

Shropshire's 0–4 population shows considerable variation across the county, with the number of young children ranging from as few as 11 to as many as 229 per LLSOA, highlighting distinct clusters of early years demand across different neighbourhoods.



### North Shrewsbury

A large concentration is found in North Shrewsbury, where a group of adjacent LLSOAs contains approximately 941 children aged 0–4, making it one of the most significant early years population areas in the county.

This area also overlaps with some of Shropshire’s highest need neighbourhoods, including Sundorne and Harlescott, where high child income deprivation coincides with higher numbers of young children.

### Oswestry

Oswestry demonstrates a notable early years population, with LSOAs in the area showing comparatively higher proportions of children aged 0–4 than other rural parts of the county. For example, Oswestry has a 0–4 population of 791.

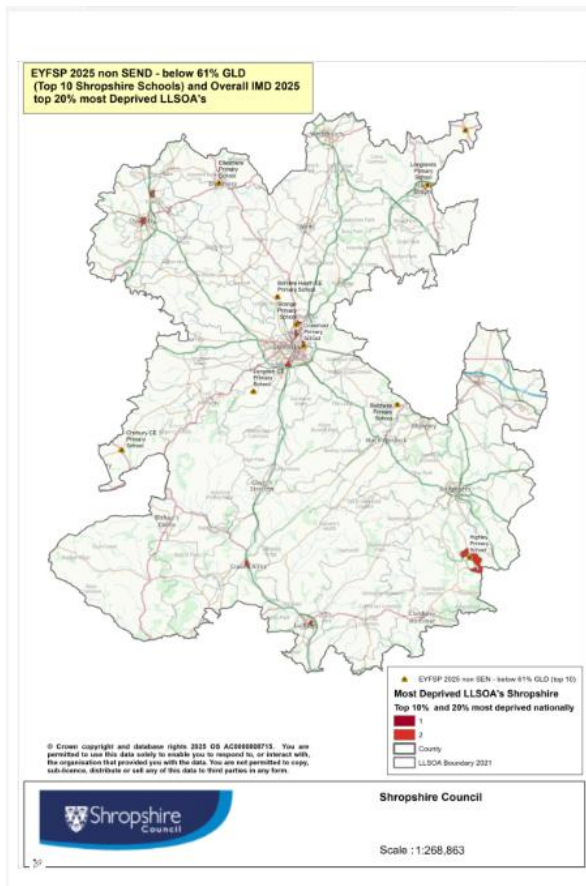
The town is also geographically central to surrounding communities experiencing deprivation, meaning that a hub based in Oswestry—or alternatively in Ludlow—could effectively serve a wider population of disadvantaged families. This could be achieved through outreach and partnership delivery models, supported by additional satellite sites.

A neighbouring LSOA within the top 20% most deprived nationally (E01028912) has a 0–4 population of 226, who could also access support in Oswestry due to its central location.

### Ludlow

Approximately 433 children aged 0–4 live within Ludlow. This is significantly higher than in neighboring LSOAs within electoral divisions ranked in the top 30% most deprived, such as Craven Arms, which has a 0–4 population of 171, and Cleobury Mortimer, with 262 children aged 0–4. However, Ludlow’s location between these areas places it in a strong position to provide access to services for families across both electoral divisions.

### 3.3 School Readiness (GLD) and FSM Patterns Good Learning Development Data in Schools & IMD 2025 Data

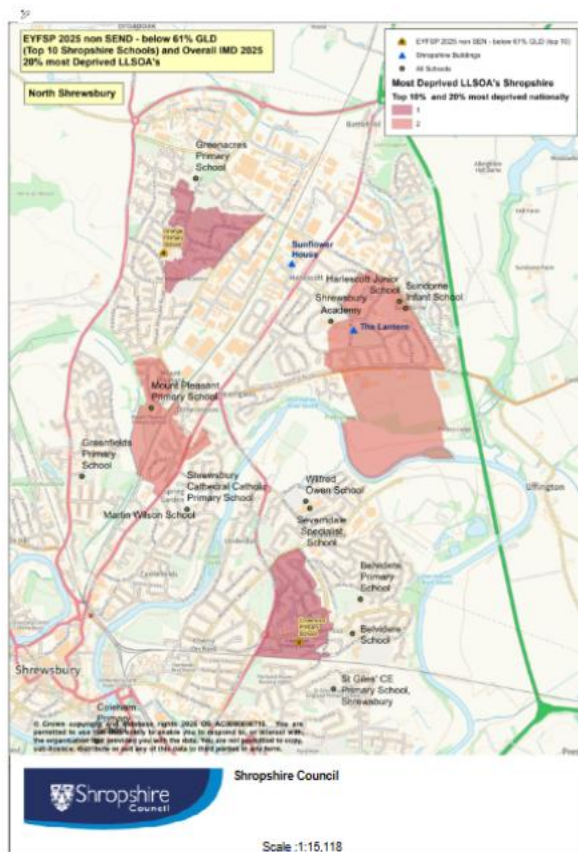


**Map; EYSFP 2025 non SEND – Below 61% GLD (Top 10 Shropshire Schools) and Overall IMD 2025 top 20% most deprived LLSOAs**

GLD School Top 10	Overall Decile	IDAC1
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Highley	2	8
Ellesmere	8	4
Longlands	8	1
Woore	7	8
Longden	6	9
The Grange Primary	1	2
Crowmoor Primary	1	2
Bomere Heath	6	7
Buildwas	5	7
Chirbury	4	7

The GLD table reveals a strong link between early educational outcomes and underlying socioeconomic disadvantage across Shropshire. The Grange Primary, Highley Primary and Crowmoor Primary all have a GLD score of less than 61% and are in the bottom 10 schools in Shropshire for Communication and Language.



**Map; EYFSP 2025 - Non SEND – Below 61% GLD (Top 10 Shropshire Schools) and Overall IMD 2025 top 20% most deprived LLSOA's**

This pattern is reflected more widely across the dataset, as Schools located in the most deprived LLSOA, particularly in North Shrewsbury and other high need localities, tend to show the weakest GLD performance alongside higher levels of Free School Meal eligibility. This is especially evident for The Grange Primary and Crowmoor Primary Schools.

### **Top Schools Percentage of Reception Children Entitled to Free School Meals.**

Setting Name	IMD Overall Decile	IDACI Index
Wilfred Owen School	4	3
Crowmoor Primary School	1	2
Grange Primary School	1	2
Holy Trinity C of E Primary School	4 (near to area in decile 3)	3 (near to area in 1)
Martin Wilson School	5	5
Greenacres Primary School	1	4 (near to area in 1)
Longlands Primary School	8 (near to LLSOA in Decile 3)	7 (near to area in 2)
Tilstock CE Primary School	5	5

The Free School Meals table further highlights the primary schools in Shropshire, with the highest proportion of Reception children eligible for FSM, and it places these schools within the wider context of deprivation. Schools such as Crowmoor Primary, Grange Primary, Greenacres, and Holy Trinity (Oswestry) are situated within or near some of the most deprived LLSOAs nationally, as reflected in their low IMD and IDACI decile scores.

Sundorne Infant School also appears within the top 23 schools countywide for Reception Class FSM eligibility, further reinforcing the need in this locality.

These schools consistently demonstrate very high levels of FSM eligibility, which often corresponding with poorer early learning outcomes, including GLD performance.

The data analysis clearly shows that low GLD outcomes and high FSM prevalence cluster in the same neighbourhood:

#### **North Shrewsbury**

- The Grange Primary School (Harlescott):
  - Overall IMD Decile 1

- IDACI Decile 1
  - Education, Skills & Training Decile 1
  - Among the lowest GLD schools in Shropshire and with high FSM levels.
- Crowmoor Primary School (Monkmoor)
    - Overall Decile 1
    - IDACI Decile 2
    - Also listed among low GLD-GLD schools with high FSM cohorts
    - Several other schools serving the North Shrewsbury area (e.g., Greenacres, Wilfred Owen) appear in the top FSM lists.

### Oswestry

- Holy Trinity C Of E (Oswestry)
  - Overall Decile 4 (near to area in 3)
  - IDACI Decile 3 (near to area in 1)
  - Also listed among low GLD schools with high FSM cohorts

Furthermore the list below highlights schools located in or very near LSOA'S IN Shropshire within the most deprived 20% nationally. Highlighting several located near proposed BSIL hub sites of Oswestry, Ludlow and North Shrewsbury.

School	Family Hub area
<b>Greenacres</b>	Central West (Sunflower House-SH)
<b>Harlescott Junior</b>	Central East (The Lantern)
<b>The Grange Primary</b>	Central West (SH)
<b>Sundorne Infants</b>	Central East (The Lantern)
<b>Mount Pleasant Primary</b>	Central West (SH)
<b>Crowmoor Primary</b>	Central East (The Lantern)
<b>Meole Brace Primary</b>	Central West (The Lantern/ Louise House )
<b>Greenacres Primary</b>	Central West (SH)
<b>Gobowen Primary</b>	North West (Oswestry)
<b>Woodside Primary</b>	North West (Oswestry)

<b>Our Lady and St Oswalds</b>	North West (Oswestry)
<b>Stokesay Primary (Craven Arms)</b>	South west (Ludlow)
<b>Ludlow Primary</b>	South West (Ludlow)
<b>Highley Primary</b>	South East (Highley)

Together, the data illustrates a strong and consistent relationship between deprivation, FSM eligibility, and school readiness, as the schools with the highest FSM levels are overwhelmingly those located in areas experiencing the greatest socioeconomic disadvantage. This clear pattern strengthens the evidence base by showing how child poverty directly aligns with early educational inequality. It also highlights the neighbourhoods where early intervention is likely to have the greatest impact.

#### 4. Summary of Findings

This analysis identifies North Shrewsbury (with a particular focus on Sundorne), Oswestry, and Ludlow as the most appropriate locations for Best Start Family Hub development, based on a strong convergence of deprivation, early years population, and educational need.

North Shrewsbury stands out as the area of highest need within Shropshire. It contains a concentration of LSOAs within the most deprived deciles nationally, including multiple areas in Decile 1 and 2 for both IMD and IDACI. The area also demonstrates a significant cluster of child poverty, with some neighbourhoods reporting over half of children living in income-deprived households. This is further reinforced by a high early years population (approximately 941 children aged 0–4), alongside poor school readiness outcomes and high levels of Free School Meal eligibility. The co-location of these factors creates the most acute and concentrated area of disadvantage in the county, supporting the recommendation of Sundorne as the initial pilot site.

Oswestry also shows clear and consistent indicators of need. All electoral divisions fall within the top 50% nationally for income deprivation affecting children, with some areas exceeding 40–48% of children living in low-income households. The town has a relatively large early years population (approximately 791 children aged 0–4) and includes LSOAs within the most deprived 20–30% nationally. In addition, Oswestry serves as a key geographic centre for surrounding rural communities with further pockets of deprivation, strengthening its suitability as a strategic hub location for outreach and wider service delivery.

Ludlow demonstrates moderate but still significant levels of deprivation, with five out of seven electoral divisions within the top 50% nationally for child income deprivation.

Certain areas, including Ludlow East and Ludlow North, show particularly high levels of low-income households among families with young children. While the early years population is smaller (approximately 433 children aged 0–4), Ludlow’s geographic position between other deprived areas, such as Craven Arms and Cleobury Mortimer (both within the top 30% most deprived nationally), enhances its role as an accessible service hub for a wider rural population.

Across all three areas, there is a strong and consistent relationship between deprivation, child poverty, and poor early educational outcomes. Schools located in the most deprived neighbourhoods—particularly in North Shrewsbury and parts of Oswestry—show the lowest Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes and the highest levels of Free School Meal eligibility. This alignment highlights the direct link between socioeconomic disadvantage and reduced school readiness, reinforcing the importance of targeted early intervention.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that North Shrewsbury, Oswestry, and Ludlow represent the areas of greatest need and opportunity for impact. North Shrewsbury offers the strongest case for immediate investment due to the scale and intensity of need, while Oswestry and Ludlow provide strategically important locations for future hub development. Their population size, deprivation profiles, and geographic positioning support a hub-and-spoke model that would maximise access to services and improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and families across Shropshire.