

It's all about me

It's my life

It's my assessment

It's my plan



Welcome to Barnet Family Services

1. Introduction

Barnet is a fantastic place to live for most families, children and young people. There are low levels of unemployment among the adult population and Barnet is benefitting from large-scale regeneration projects, which are creating more housing, infrastructure and opportunities for all. The borough has a diverse population which provides a culturally rich environment for children, families and professionals working in the borough.

Barnet, in recent years has experienced rapid child population growth and there are now more children living in Barnet than any other London borough. Most children and young people living in the borough are achieving and doing well and making successful transitions into adulthood, although in common with all local authorities, there are some families who need additional help and support to achieve similar outcomes.

By 2022, we want Barnet to be an even better place to live for all families and we are supporting our aim of being the most Family Friendly borough in London by ensuring we have clean and safe open spaces, affordable and good quality housing, excellent schools and accessible and responsive local services.

Our Family Friendly strategy aims to develop evidence informed and high-quality services by innovating and integrating. To achieve our goal, we will collaborate with our partners and work towards creating sustainable change by looking for strengths and opportunities that we can build on within our workforce, communities, families and children and young people.

To realise our ambitions for children and young people, we will not compromise on:

- the quality of staff we employ across Family Services
- our relentless drive to empower and equip our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful social work assessments and interventions with families through curious and skilled child centred practice
- ensuring our involvement with the most vulnerable children in the borough positively impacts on their outcomes
- providing effective practice leadership, management and training and development pathways to ensure outcomes for children are achieved as appropriate and proportionate to their needs
- the supervision, training and support all professionals and practitioners receive to do their jobs well

Barnet Family Services recognise the importance of ensuring all new staff to the borough are given support and guidance to understand our population, local services and model of practice. We want you to feel welcomed, valued, and supported in your new role within the organisation, so we have an induction programme that aims to ensure that you are equipped with the knowledge you need and helped to understand the ways in which you can contribute to our vision.

The Barnet Corporate Plan underpins and sets out the objectives of the Council for the next 5 years. Based on the principles of fairness, opportunity and responsibility and underpinned by a strong commitment to partnership working in order to commission joined up, affordable, quality services to meet the 2024 vision.

You can read the full [Corporate Plan for 2019–2024](#) on our website.

2. Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership

The concept of 'Resilient Families and Resilient Children' is at the heart of the vision for the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership coupled with an ambition to drive forward a strong partnership that enables children and families to thrive and achieve.

Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership [BSCP]) is a multi-agency arrangement, which brings together local partners working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Barnet. Members include Children's Services, Police Health and Education.

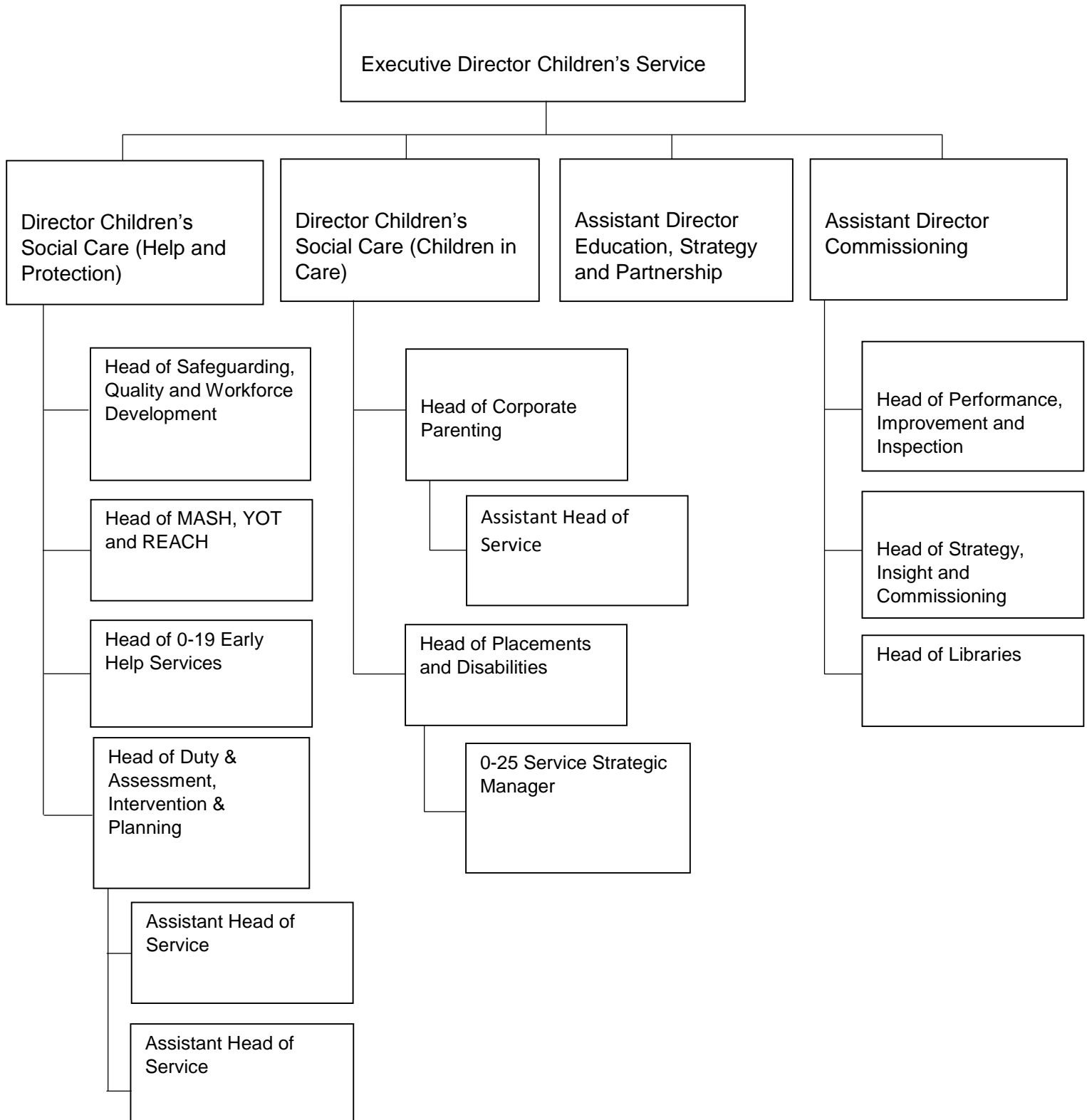
The main role of the partnership is to co-ordinate local arrangements for safeguarding children, and to monitor the effectiveness of those arrangements. The partnership is committed to improving outcomes for children and young people.

At the heart of our vision is the concept of Resilient Families and Resilient Children. Our ambition is to drive forward a strong partnership that enables children and families to thrive and achieve. We aim to do this through;

- multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures
- consultation in service development and changes for children and young people
- multi-agency safeguarding training
- awareness raising
- listening to the lived experience of children
- monitoring the effectiveness and performance of services for children and young people
- undertaking case reviews
- thematic reviews
- multi-agency audits

More information on the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership can be found on our website thebarnetscp.org.uk

3. Family Services Structure



4. What We Do: Early Help and Safeguarding

4.1. 0-19 Early Help Services

Barnet Early Help Services are provided across three locality areas, East/Central, West and South to ensure support is closer to where families live. Each locality co-locates professionals in early years, family support and youth work to deliver a range of targeted and multi-agency early help support including parenting programmes, family support, 1:1 support to prevent difficulties from escalating.

Families can be referred directly to for universal and universal plus services or referred to the MASH so they can be discussed at the weekly 0-19 Early Help Multi-Agency Panels. The panel meetings share information between agencies and identify the Lead Professional and Team Around the Family for children, young people and families needing targeted Early Help delivered by two or more agencies. Early Help Assessments and Plans provide for a coordinated multi-agency approach. The service, also, provides parenting and 1:1 support for children and families receiving statutory social work interventions services, i.e. parenting support to help parents manage routines and boundaries, step-down support and positive activities for children and young people.

4.2. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a partnership of police, Local Authorities, Health and other agencies (Education, Housing, Probation, Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse) who co-locate professionals and their data into a secure, research and decision-making unit. The MASH is not a case holding team.

MASH in Barnet is the single point of entry or 'front door' for professionals and members of the public who have concerns for a child or young person (unborn-18 years) or where it is felt they would benefit from additional support services. All contacts to the service are screened so professionals and families can be signposted to the right information or advice, or referred to services including 0-19 Early Help Services, the first time. Children and young people who need a safeguarding response to ensure their safety and well-being are referred to Children's Social Care.

4.3. Assessment, Intervention & Planning Service

There are four Duty & Assessment Teams (DATs). The teams take it in turns to be on 'duty' one week at a time. The DAT's receive referrals from the MASH and undertake statutory social work interventions including Child and Family Assessments and s47 (Children Act 1989) Child Protection Enquiries. Assessments generally take between 20 – 50 days to complete and involve visiting children and families at home, networking with their wider families and liaising with a range of professionals involved in their lives. The DAT's assessments decide whether families need further (targeted early help, child in need, child protection and child in care) services to meet their needs.

There are seven Intervention and Planning Teams (I&P) who work with children and young people who have been assessed by DAT's as needing Child in Need and Child Protection Plans or who may be in Court Proceedings or short-term care (s20 Children Act 1989). The teams work to safeguard children, create timely change in families and/or support children to achieve permanency in alternative family arrangements so their outcomes are improved. I&P work with children and young people until they no longer require statutory social work services or until they are permanently placed in alternative care either within their extended family or in long term fostering or adoptive families.

4.4. Vulnerable Adolescents

Exploitation of children and young people is located within a wider context of risk and harm. Barnet has a Strategic Lead for Vulnerable Adolescents that works across Early Help and Children's Social Care. The role supports a partnership approach in delivering preventative and disruption interventions alongside our key partners in health, police, education and the voluntary sector in order to identify concern and intervene to protect victims and disrupt perpetrators of abuse swiftly and effectively.

4.4.1. REACH (Resilient Engaged Achieving Children)

REACH is a team comprised of Social workers, Family Support Practitioners, Clinical Practitioners, Educational Psychologists and Speech & Language Therapists who work closely together to engage young people who are vulnerable to criminal and sexual exploitation, this includes young people involved in offending behaviours and who go missing from home. The team provides intensive interventions to support young people to engage with education, training and employment and/or positive activities that reduce the risks and vulnerabilities to exploitation and harm.

4.5. Youth Offending Services

Barnet Youth Offending Team (YOT) is a multi-agency partnership of Police, Health, Youth Justice Practitioners, Forensic Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapists and Educational Psychologists who work with young people who have received community or custodial sentences. The YOT aims to reduce the risk of re-offending by engaging young people in education, victim reparation and desistance interventions and by supporting young people to resettle into the community following a custodial sentence.

4.6. Barnet Integrated Clinical Services (BICS)

The Barnet Integrated Clinical Service (BICS) delivers child centred mental health and wellbeing support through Clinical Practitioners, Primary Mental Health Workers and Child Wellbeing Practitioners working alongside Children's Social Care and 0-19 Early Help Services.

The service integrates mental health support alongside professionals in schools, 0-19 Early Help Services, Children's Social Care and Youth Offending Services to facilitate coordinated and rapid access to clinical services including mental health screening, assessment and treatments.

4.7. Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Workforce Development Service

The Safeguarding Team provide strategic leadership on key safeguarding issues and in meeting our statutory responsibilities for Child Protection Case Conferences and Looked after Children reviews.

The team is comprised of Child Protection Conference Chairs, Independent Reviewing Officers, Quality Assurance Officers, Practice Development Workers and Learning & Development Officers who work seamlessly to oversee and drive the quality of social work practice for children.

4.7.1. Workforce Learning and Development Team

The Workforce Development Team provides and commissions a range of training and learning opportunities for all staff in the children's workforce including bespoke training in accordance with individual, team or service development requirements.

5. What We Do: Corporate Parenting & Disabilities

5.1. 0-25 Disability Service

The 0-25 Disability Service is a new and developing service which is aimed at ensuring that disabled children and young adults have a birth to 25 service that promotes their well-being and safety and a smooth transition into adult services if required. The service also ensures that they have timely social work intervention, including assessment, care planning and risk management. To ensure children and young people receive the right level of support the team collaborate with Health and SEND to develop the care packages for clients. The team co-ordinates access to short breaks for families who need additional support for their child with a disability.

The 0-25 Disability Service offers social care support to approximately 200 children and young people from birth to 18 who have a severe or profound disability or a complex and life limiting health condition. Additionally, they offer a service to approximately 220 young people aged 18 to 25 who have a diagnosed learning disability. Referrals to the team may relate to possible safeguarding issues or the family may be requesting a package of support. An assessment of need is completed to identify what type of plan is needed and the team supports transitions to adulthood completing Care Act assessments for those approaching 18. Within the team are various specialist workers such as Occupational Therapists and Direct Payments workers.

5.2. Corporate Parenting Services

The Council is the Corporate Parent to our looked after children and care leavers and the Corporate parenting service works to ensure that all care planning and support for children and young people who are in care is of a high quality with the child and young person being the centre to all service planning; ensuring good

outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers and supporting effective transition to independence for care leavers. Life story work takes place across all teams responsible for the children in our care and care leavers. The impact of direct life story work has improved outcomes for children and young people and it is a significant area of ongoing development and improvement. This service comprises three Children in Care Teams, Fostering and Adoption teams, Onwards and Upwards (Leaving Care), the Family Resource Centre (Contact Centre) and the Placements team.

5.2.1. Children in Care Teams

There are three children in care teams (CIC) who work with children and young people who have become looked after by the Local Authority following Court Proceedings or occasionally are in voluntary care arrangements (s20 Children Act 1989). The teams work closely with children and young people placed in long term fostering, within extended family arrangements or adoptive families to promote resilience and positive outcomes for them. The teams will work with children and young people until they no longer require statutory social work services or until they are transferred to Onwards and Upwards (Leaving Care) Team. The children in care teams work with the whole system around the child to inform care planning and this will always include the Virtual School, the carers and placement providers, health professionals and the birth family.

5.2.2. Carer Recruitment and Adoption Team

This team is responsible for recruiting, training and assessing foster carers, connected carers, private fostering arrangements and special guardians. The team, also, works closely with colleagues in the children's teams to undertake joint viability assessments of possible family placements for children in care or those coming into care.

The team actively promotes fostering through a robust marketing strategy, and is responsible for raising community awareness about private fostering.

5.2.3. The Carer Support Team

This team supports the induction, support, supervision and training of the borough's 140 Foster carers, Connected Carers, Staying Put arrangements, supported lodgings and carers who are privately fostering.

The team runs support groups for foster carers and fostered children and works closely with their colleagues in children's teams to ensure that placement planning reviews and standards of care are maintained to the highest standard for children in our care.

This team is being developed to take on the Special Guardianship support shortly. They will ensure that special guardians receive the necessary support to care for the child in their care and also that this arrangement remains consistently in the child's best interest.

5.2.4. Adoption Service

From September 2019 the recruitment of adopters, the support of adopters, family finding and adoption support will move to a regional arrangement as part of the Adopt North London Regional Adoption Agency. All work that relates to permanency planning for the child remains within Barnet and will be led by the Children's Teams in close collaboration with the RAA.

5.2.5. Onwards and Upwards

This team works with young people aged 18-25 who have been looked after by the Local Authority to support and aid their transition to independence and adulthood. The service provides a range of robust and creative services to achieve this and includes specialist services for our unaccompanied asylum seekers. The offer of services is set out for young people and professionals in the [Local Offer](#)

5.2.6. Family Resource Centre

Our family contact centre provides supervised contact for our children and young people when it is required. A contact planning meeting is held in order to discuss individual requirements and expectations and a multi-skilled team provide this essential service. The centre is used for a range of other meetings such as child protection conferences or family meetings.

5.2.7. The Placements Team

The Placements Team provides an essential support service to social workers by identifying independent foster, residential and specialist placements. The Placement Team is responsible for ensuring the placements budgets are managed effectively; ensuring there is sufficiency in use of both internal and external placements; ensuring that external placements are properly commissioned, contracted and utilised to effectively support children and young people. The team have developed important relationships with providers over the years and they have an important on-going role in terms of ensuring that all placements can provide quality care to children and young people.

5.2.8. Corporate Parenting Principles, Pledge and Support Services

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 stipulates that when local authorities become corporate parents, they should have regard to specific principles when exercising functions in relation to children in care and young people, to:

- act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them
- make sure they have access to services

- make sure that they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work
- prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

To ensure that Barnet acts as a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers, we:

- have committed to supporting children and young people to achieve their best in childhood, adolescence and adulthood as outlined in the Corporate Parenting Pledge for children in care and care leavers as approved by full council in January 2016
- provide annual updates on performance against the pledge to Corporate Parenting Panel
- provide learning and development for elected members and senior officers to make sure they understand their duties and responsibilities to children and care and care leavers
- ensure elected members, senior officers and partners can monitor and challenge the performance of the council and its partner agencies regarding outcomes for children in care and care leavers through the appropriate channels such as the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel and Corporate Parenting Officers' Group

6. SENDIASS

The [SENDIASS](#) team, (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Service) provide confidential and impartial support to parents of children with SEND and young people (up to 25 years old) with SEND to help them make informed decisions about their Education. They have a current caseload of approx. 140 families and deliver a variety of workshops to parents/carers to help them deal with some of the complexities of living with a child with SEND, for example, understanding ECHPs.

7. What we do: Strategic Lead, Children and Young People

7.1. Live Unlimited

Live Unlimited is a charity which supports the vision of providing all children who spend time in care and care leavers with the opportunities, support and inspiration to fulfil their potential and follow their dreams. The charity has established the 'Imagination Trust', a scheme that allows young people to apply for individual small grants for activities such as football or ballet lessons, theatre trips and out-of-school activities supporting them fulfilling their own unique hopes and dreams. A driving lesson project is also being piloted with the AA to enable young people to learn a key skill. The charity helps some of the 326 looked after children and 230 care leavers in Barnet. The charity has three main themes:

- encouraging looked after children and care leavers to follow their passions and explore their interests
- help equip looked after children and care leavers with the life skills they need to fulfil their potential
- inspiring all looked after children and care leavers to succeed

7.2. Voice of the Child Team

The vision of the Voice of the Child Team is that all our children, young people and families will have the opportunity to participate in decision making that affects their lives and have their voices heard. The focus of the Voice of the Child team is to support meaningful and rights-based participation practice across the council. Through their work, they will promote and advance all of children's rights

The Youth Voice Offer covers a range of Youth Voice Forums (YVF) that seek to provide children and young people the opportunity to have their say on service development, strategic decisions that includes locally, regionally and nationally. The YVF is the vehicle through which the team seek to achieve its strategic aims and ultimately its vision. Each YVF provides a unique platform for voices to be heard, but each YVF seeks to do this in a different way.

The Youth Voice Forums are split between

'Universal' forums (open to all)

- Youth Board
- Youth Assembly
- UK Youth Parliament

And **'Targeted' forums** (open to young people who need to meet certain criteria – such as having care experience)

- Children in Care Council, which is called Barnet on Point #BOP
- Barnet Development Team Youth for young people with SEND

Throughout the year the Voice of the Child team also deliver consultation events; *Make your Mark* ballot, celebration event for CIC, focus groups with service users and an opportunity for young people to take part in Takeover Day.

The YVF's are inter-connected and a young person may wish to be a member of all of them or exclusively to one. They believe that the Youth Voice Offer helps raise aspirations and provides a platform for children and young people to discover more about citizenship, democracy and community activism.

7.3. The Child Friendly Cities & Communities Programme

Barnet is the first London borough to partner with UNICEF UK to deliver the international Child Friendly Community programme, which seeks to embrace and embed children's rights across all work that impacts children and young people living, working and/or studying in Barnet. In practical terms, this means young

people's voices, needs, rights and priorities will be championed and at the centre of service delivery, development, policies and decision-making.

8. What We Do: Commissioning & Strategy

8.1. Strategy, Insight and Commissioning Team

The Strategy, Insight and Commissioning team provide strategic and operational support to Heads of Service and Directors. They offer insight on data analysis, model current, future demands and needs by researching best practice, which in turn enables the team to inform strategy developments, policy decisions and service improvements to enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of family services. The Strategy and Insight officers also provide support and advice on service improvement projects, inspections, and responses to government consultations and bids.

The Strategy and Insight team links closely with commissioning, as commissioners use insight to design and develop recommendations including future options around commissioning intentions.

Commissioners lead on all aspects of the commissioning cycle, which include conducting service reviews, understanding the service's business needs and that of the children and young people, now and for the future. This includes looking at costs, and uses the findings to inform commissioning strategies and plans.

8.2. Communications, Complaints and Support Team

The support team supports a wide range of activities across Family Services to enable frontline practitioners to deliver excellent services to our residents. Much of these activities are about freeing up professionals to maximise the time they can spend on casework. For example, Practitioners Support Assistants (PSAs) sit within Social Work teams and deliver a flexible administrative service, depending on what is required at any time. The Executive Support Officers look after Family Services Senior Management Team, delivering a variety of flexible, tailored business support.

The Complaints team manage the process for all complaints (including the Children Act) and work collaboratively with teams to ensure that service users get the best possible experience, and that we learn from emerging themes of dissatisfaction that can inform service improvement. They also deal with all Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests as well as collating the compliments that Family service receive and celebrate.

The team manage three websites – our citizen portal's primary purpose is to give enough information for residents, carers, parents and young people to access universal services themselves or enable them to access council services where necessary; our professional's extranet (known as Working with Children in Barnet) gives information to our partners who work in the community; and our intranet gives staff all the information they need about working in the Barnet family.

We have an employee engagement program that gives staff the opportunity to interact with Senior Managers and get their voice heard, and keep staff informed with a weekly newsletter called Grapevine. Any external communication is also managed through the team so that we have consistent messaging, look and feel and promote our Family Friendly vision.

The team also deal with recruitment, and setting staff up on IT systems. Other activities include Business Continuity, holding key relationships with Facilities Management and accommodation requirements and Health & Safety.

8.3. Performance, Improvement & Inspection Team

This area is responsible for:

- managing all the family services IT systems. Staff are provided with hands on support on all systems including help with all things LCS and EHM related as well as new developments on them. They also run the training and run the daily helpdesk
- producing and analysing all Family Services performance data, from the weekly trackers to the annual statutory returns. The Performance Team will also undertake bespoke analysis when needed to support bids/meetings etc.
- improvements by working with the service to help implement innovation, this could be anything from a new database that might be needed to a refurbishing a brand-new children's home
- providing Information Governance and all things data protection from helping investigate data breaches to providing advice on information sharing.

8.4. Finance Team

The Finance Team (11 members including the Manager), supports the whole of Family Services, to provide financial services for our service users, clients and suppliers, e.g. foster carers, care leavers, residential homes or experts used for court proceedings.

The team arranges travel for front line staff to enable them to facilitate meetings, assessments, e.g., booking trains, flights and hotels at home and abroad. The team can arrange to pay by cash, load money on to pre-paid cards and use credit cards to make online purchases.

The team is very flexible and make processes as simple as possible so as not to create barriers to you carrying out your job.

8.5. Libraries

Barnet Libraries provides a wide range of services to all ages for those who live, work or study in Barnet. It is free to join and each member can borrow up to 15 items at a time. These include physical items as well as ebooks, eAudiobooks, e-magazines, digital comics and digital newspapers. There are also over 300 online

databases and information sources for homework and research. In addition to all these resources the library service also provides a wide range of events and activities from Early Years learning sessions and teenage reading groups to IT classes and author talks for adults. 2019 has been designated the Barnet Libraries Year of Learning with 100s of learning events and activities taking place over the course of the year. Each library has space for students to study and community rooms for hire by local groups. In addition to 14 static libraries, the service also runs a mobile service, a home library service for those who are unable to travel to a library building due to age or ill health, alongside a school libraries service supporting teaching and learning in Barnet's primary schools and a specialist Early Years Service.