

# Family Services

## Document control

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**Barnet**  
**Safeguarding**  
**Children Partnership**



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# 1. Introduction

This document sets out Barnet's 0-19 Early Help offer and Strategy for the continued development of our Early Help Services to ensure that children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes are provided with timely and effective early support to prevent their needs or difficulties escalating.

Our offer encompasses universal and targeted services aimed at intervening as soon as difficulties start to emerge and/or when individual circumstances are likely to create future difficulties. Barnet 0-19 Early Help Services provides help and support to children throughout their minority, from pre-birth through to adulthood in recognition of the evidence that demonstrates effective interventions can improve children's life chances at any point during childhood and adolescence.

Barnet's Children & Young People's Plan 2019 - 2022 outlines the ambition of our Children & Young People's Partnership to create a Family Friendly borough in which communities are resilient, high quality education and affordable housing is available, families have access to safe and open spaces, children's rights and needs are respected and responded to and our services work holistically together to improve outcomes for Barnet's children.

This Strategy sets out how Early Help services will contribute to ambitions set out within Barnet's Children & Young People's Plan.

## 1.1 The Case for Early Help

There is significant evidence demonstrating the value and importance of Early Help. Graham Allen's report highlights how Early Help can break intergenerational cycles of dysfunction which in turn can significantly reduce later costs to the taxpayer as well as non-financial costs to society as a whole<sup>1</sup>. The National Audit Office report on Early Action argues that a concerted shift away from reactive spending towards early action can result in better outcomes and greater value for money<sup>2</sup>. These views are echoed by the Troubled Families Programme (Family First in Barnet) and the Early Intervention Foundation.<sup>3</sup> Barnet's own empirical research on cost avoidance supports the national literature. In 2016, our study of 109 families worked with by Early Help services indicated savings to the public sector of approximately £1.1m by resolving problems early, and preventing problems from escalating.

The challenges for Early Help Service this Strategy will seek to address, include:

- **Providing evidence to support the case for investment.**

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<sup>1</sup> "Early Intervention – the next steps" in January 2011 Graham Allen

Early Intervention: Smart Investments, Massive Savings' was published in July 2011

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Early-Action-full-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.earlyinterventionfoundation.org.uk/>

- **Knowing what works in creating sustainable change in families**
- **Creating effective local partnerships**
- **Building community engagement in the design and delivery of local services**

## 1.2 Delivery of Early Help in Barnet

In Barnet, our Early Help services are underpinned by our Resilience approach which focuses on the need for children to:

- **Have safe and trusted relationships**
- **Be stable and secure**
- **Achieve and have aspirations in education**
- **Benefit from positive friendships**
- **Develop individual talents and interests**
- **Believe in themselves and their ability to achieve their ambitions in life**

Barnet's Early Help Services have been reconfigured and transformed over the past year to create three locality based Early Help Hubs (Appendix 1) that co-locate professionals in Early Years, Family Support and Youth Work alongside a range of partner agencies delivering preventative and targeted services to children, young people and their families.

Further, our Early Help model seeks to create closer alliance with agencies involved with adults who have caring responsibilities for children including Probation, Adult Mental Health, Domestic Abuse providers and Substance Misuse services in recognition of the need to ensure that interventions at the earliest point should seek to address difficulties in the whole family system and we have also sought to build stronger cohesion with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and with universal health and education services to ensure our offer is coherent and organised services around the needs of the whole family, the schools that children attend and the communities that they live within.

Early Help delivery is coordinated through a multi-agency panel that meets weekly and allocates a skilled and trusted Lead Professional to coordinate a multi-disciplinary network around the child and family. The coordinated effort harnesses professional expertise by building a Team Around the Family and ensures that children's needs are considered in the context of their whole family situation and their environmental and community context.

## 1.3 Early Help Vision and Principles

### *One Pathway*

Barnet has a 'no wrong door' approach and an overarching pathway document that sets out a shared and common language for all agencies delivering services to meet children's needs.

### *The child is at the centre of all we do*

Whilst we will have a whole family approach, work with the wider family should always be viewed in relation to 'how it will improve resilience and outcomes for the child'

<b><i>There are no hand off points</i></b>	Professionals in universal services hold the child's hand and invite others in when additional help to build resilience is required.
<b><i>We are all responsible and accountable</i></b>	Each professional is accountable and responsible for the child – if you identify a need that can be met then you are required to take action.
<b><i>Families tell their story once</i></b>	Children, young people and their families should only have to tell their story once, information should be shared (with the agreement of those to whom the information belongs) and inform a single Early Help Assessment and multi-agency plan.
<b><i>Accessible for Families -</i></b>	Families should be able to easily access services close to where they live, and at times of day/week that work for them. Our locality based Early Help Hubs provide professionals with a core base for touch down and , where practitioners can touch down and come together, and delivery points in a range of community venues i.e. Children's Centres and Youth Centres.
<b><i>Strong relationships between practitioners -</i></b>	Open relationships between practitioners encourages informal learning about services, a shared understanding and language around Early Help work, and also better communication when working together to support children, young people and their families.
<b><i>Right Help, First Time</i></b>	The importance of understanding a child's situation, the underlying factors and mobilising the right help promptly so children are not 'referred on' from service to service without receiving the help they need.
<b><i>Responsive and flexible service</i></b>	This principle focusses on stepping away from a box ticking culture, and seeing a child or young person in their family, home and environmental context, and then flexing the service provided to meet these needs.
<b><i>Improving shared targets and outcomes for children and young people</i></b>	Improving outcomes for children and young people depends on the effort of a number of different organisations and professionals working together with the family, rather than just one organisation. We can help to reinforce a child centred – rather than organisational – focus on strategy and delivery through asking whether we are making an impact on shared outcomes for children and young people.
<b><i>Making time for reflective practice</i></b>	Taking the time to step back and reflect on what has gone well, and what needs to improve is an important way of practitioners

***Practitioners share information with each other***

helping to hone their skills, and improve Early Help services in future.

Practitioners must feel that they have the permission and ability to share information between themselves. This principle is important to building strong relationships between practitioners (principle 3.7), as well as ensuring that families only tell their story once (principle 3.5).

## 2. Early Help Strategic Priorities

To achieve our aims to develop and deliver responsive and effective Early Help Services, Barnet has set out four Strategic Priorities. These are:

- **Multi-Agency Leadership**
- **Predict and Prevent**
- **Identify and Intervene**
- **Building Sustainability and Resilience**

### 2.1 Priority 1: Multi-Agency Leadership

This strategic priority sets out the expectations of political, senior and operational leaders across the local authority, including faith and voluntary sector organisations. All local leaders have a responsibility to ensure children in Barnet thrive and achieve. To do this there must be a shared understanding of the needs of our child population and an agreed and coordinated approach to deliver services as early in the life of problems as possible to ensure children's outcomes are optimised.

Leaders must exercise and model positive and pro-active curiosity about what life is like for children and young people in Barnet, provide challenge to systems and practices that do not promote their best outcomes and appropriately escalate when children are identified to be at risk of harm.

Governance frameworks that include regular meetings between the Independent Chair of the BSCP with the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Barnet, Lead member for Children and Director of Family Services will ensure ongoing oversight of areas relating to Early Help services safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Barnet. The BSCP will review this Strategy as required and in response to national research, policy and guidance.

### Outcomes Sought:

- The well-being of children and young people is prioritised across the entire council including partner agencies, political and community leaders and this is reflected in their respective strategic ambitions and plans
- Children, young people and communities are invited to meaningfully participate, contribute and influence our strategic priorities, plans and activities to ensure their voices are heard, listened to and acted upon
- Children and young people in need of Early Help are considered in the systems and contexts in which they live, learn and grow and which recognise the valuable contributions their families, schools, and communities make towards achieving successful outcomes
- Individuals living and working in Barnet from businesses, professional and non-professional backgrounds, grassroots organisations, the voluntary sector, community and faith leaders are effectively engaged, understand what Early Help is, how they can support the development of the Early Help offer and know what to do if they are worried about a child or young person

## 2.2 Priority 2: Predict and Prevent

This strategic priority aims to ensure that agencies work effectively together to identify early, those children and young people at the greatest risk of adverse outcomes so that preventative services can be effectively mobilised. Our aim is to ensure that early help is effective in building resilience and preventing vulnerabilities from escalating into social or educational exclusion, neglect and abuse.

We will achieve this by being rooted in the communities children and families live within, collating information that helps us understand the needs of local communities and by staying up to date with research and effective practice to drive responsive services that meet emerging patterns of local need.

### Outcomes sought:

- Multi-agency information and intelligence is gathered to identify risks and vulnerabilities in groups, communities and individuals as they relate to exploitation of children and young people
- Service user feedback and agency information is effectively used to shape service delivery, target resources, test effectiveness of help and focus strategic priorities
- Communities are effectively engaged in identifying issues and mobilised to assist solutions

- Inclusive and accessible preventative and evidenced based programmes are delivered in Children's Centres, Schools/Colleges, Youth Centres and in the community to promote social inclusion and engagement in positive activities
- Early Help Services are delivered by a child centred workforce who have a good understanding of the communities they work within and the range of preventative and targeted services available to support them
- Preventative and early help services are delivered by professionals who are confident and equipped with an appropriate range of skills to identify need and respond preventatively
- All agencies delivering early help interventions are equipped to pro-actively intervene, build resilience, promote healthy friendships and relationships and prevent problems escalating.
- Preventative interventions are based on the latest evidence of what works and the impact of Early Help work is measured.
- Prevention activities are targeted at those that need them the most and those at the greatest risk of poor outcomes.

## **2.3 Priority 3: Identify and Intervene**

This strategic priority focuses on identification of children and young people who are at the greatest risk of poor outcomes and our shared ambition to provide responsive and effective multi-agency responses and support. The aim of this strategic priority is to ensure that children and young people are effectively engaged in services that promote their emotional well-being, pro-social behaviour, education and social inclusion and ensure their safety.

Our expectation is that agencies and professionals cooperate and collaborate to build a clear and accurate picture of a child or young person's circumstances, know how to identify signs that a child or young person is in need of early help and intervene effectively and/or proactively access a broader range of services if more support is needed to improve a child's outcomes.

Weekly Early Help Multi-Agency Panels provide a rapid and coordinated response to requests for early help. The Panels ensure the needs of the whole family are considered and appropriate agencies are swiftly mobilised. There is an expectation that all agencies take responsibility for contributing to effective interventions for children, young people and their family's; taking on the Lead Professional role when appropriate.

### **Outcomes sought:**

- All interventions undertaken with children, young people and their families build on their individual, familial and community resilience and resources

- The children's workforce are equipped with a range of knowledge and skills to deliver evidenced based and outcome focused early help interventions
- Agency interventions are informed by best practice guidance, research and innovation
- Children, young people and their families are actively involved in planning and reviewing early help interventions, and can say that positive changes have been made in their lives
- Professionals in the council, community, schools, health settings and safeguarding systems have relevant and proportionate knowledge of local communities needs as they relate to children, young people and families and understand how services are working together to improve outcomes
- Families are provided with the right help first time and this reduces the requirement for statutory interventions
- Agencies working preventatively have a sound understanding of the Early Help Assessment Framework
- The multi-agency professional network is equipped with the knowledge and skills required to build trusted relationships with young people at risk of exploitation and proactively divert children and young people from the criminal justice system

## **2.4 Priority 4: Building Sustainability and Resilience**

This Strategic Priority focusses on pioneering building sustainability and resilience in children and young people in receipt of Early Help, as well as the wider Early Help delivery framework:

To build resilience in our children, young people, their families and communities requires a shared commitment from all agencies towards delivery of a shared purpose, in which services are accessible and responsive to those that need them and build on existing strengths to promote sustainability.

All agencies must commit to listening to, engaging and collaborating with our communities to enable them to build capacity and resources to solve their own difficulties and prevent further problems arising.

### **Outcomes Sought:**

- Community engagement, participation and co-production in the design and delivery of Early Help Services
- Communities in which children, young people and families are able to thrive
- Individual and collective strengths are recognised and built upon
- Agencies work seamlessly together to deliver an integrated Early Help offer

- Early Help Services are effective in preventing the need for statutory interventions
- A skilled and confident children's workforce that is able to effectively create change that improves children's outcomes
- Trusted relationships are built with children and young people to encourage pro-social behaviours and engagement in positive activities

### 3. Communication Strategy

To support the large volume of agencies involved in the delivery of Early Help Services to effectively share messages and information in relation to the delivery of Early Help services, a communications strategy which identifies key messages and communication channels is attached at Appendix 4.

### 4. Monitoring the Impact of Early Help

The Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership will maintain oversight of the effectiveness of the multi-agency partnership in delivering the aims of this Strategy.

The 0-19 Strategic Board will steer the Multi-Agency partnership in delivery of 0-19 Early Help Services and provide annual reports to the BSCP. The 0-19 Strategic Board will meet quarterly to review outputs of the three 0-19 Locality Advisory Boards.

The three 0-19 Locality Advisory Boards have been established to engage with local delivery partners, including community representatives and voluntary, community and faith sectors in the delivery and design of local services.

The quality and effectiveness of 0-19 Early Help Services will be monitored via regular quality assurance activities including multi-agency audits that will support the identification of strengths and generate learning within the Early Help system.

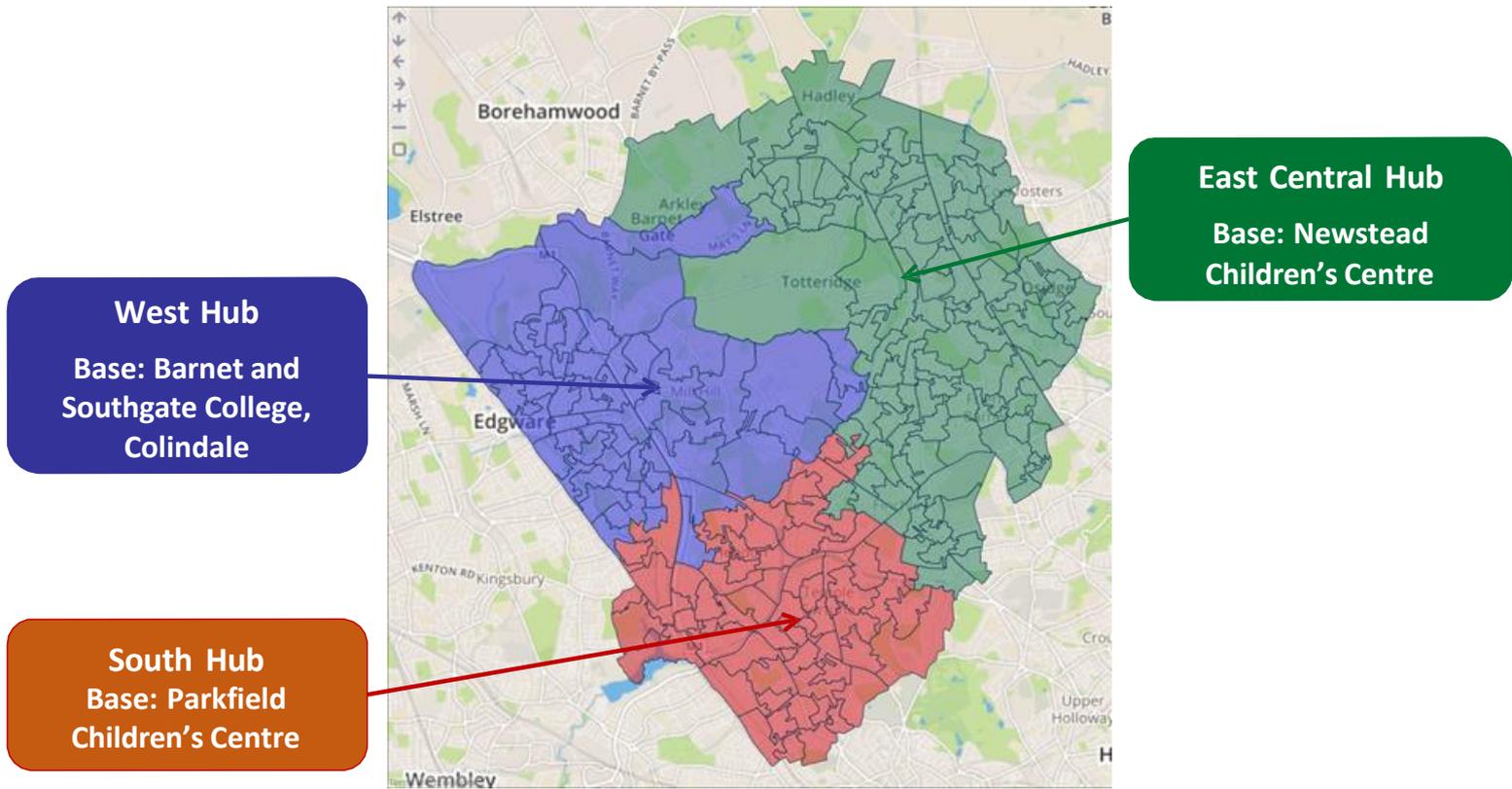
The 0-19 EH Board is developing a suite of Key Performance Indicators which will act as shared partnership measures and outcomes, and also track the impact of key individual services.

The Key Performance Indicators will include:

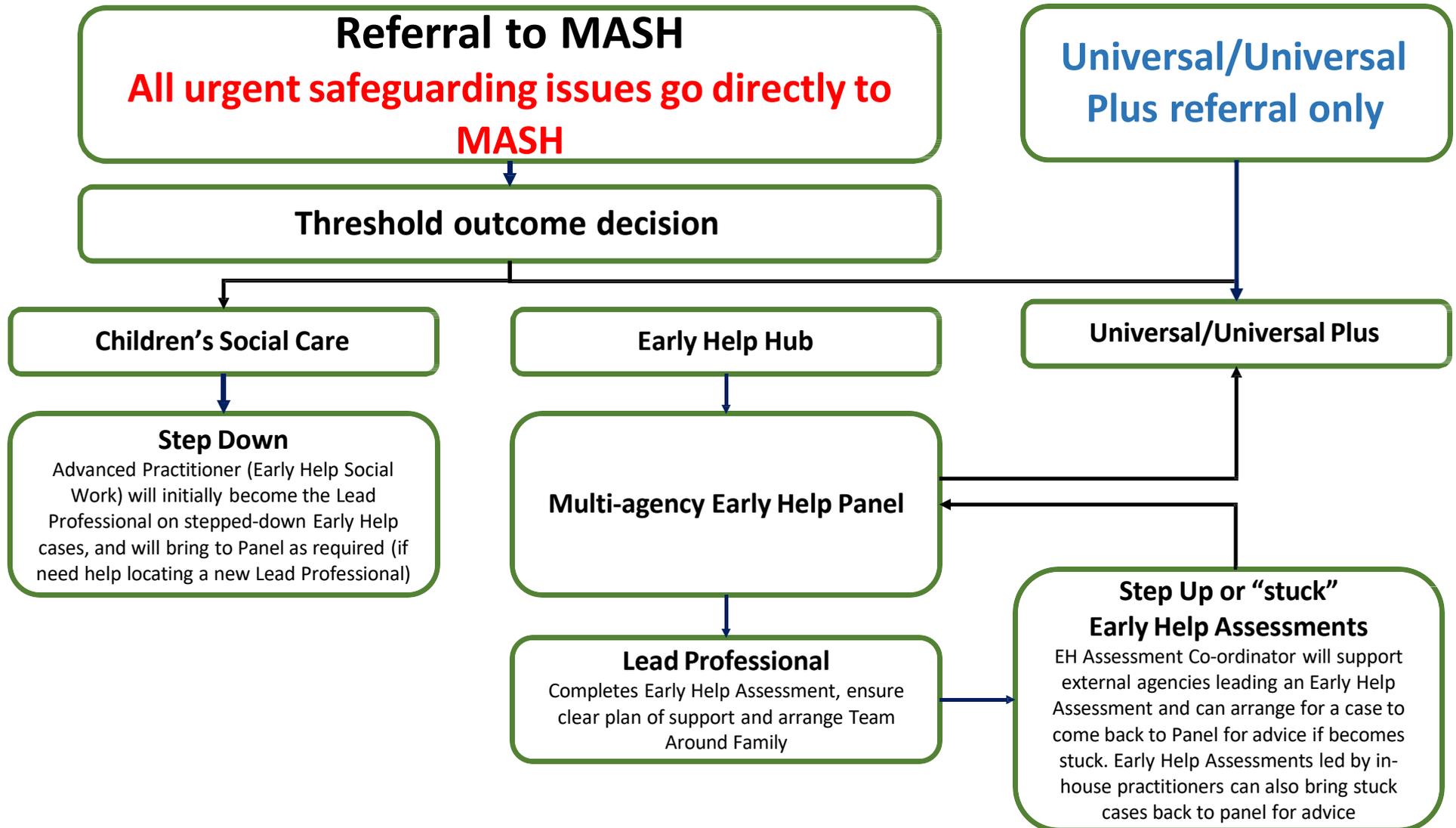
- Volume of Early Help Assessments
- Step up/ Step down
- Use of Universal Plus services
- Reduction of referrals into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Use and impact of positive and diversion activities
- Reduction in Homeless and Rent Arrears

- Improvement in physical and emotional health and wellbeing
- Improvement school readiness, attendance, attainment and progress
- Enabling families to stay together, where safe to do so for the child
- Reducing conflict within families
- Reducing incidence of serious knife crime, gang involvement/association and exploitation
- More young people remaining in Education, Employment and Training
- Young Carers feel supported
- Rates of substance misuse are reduced.

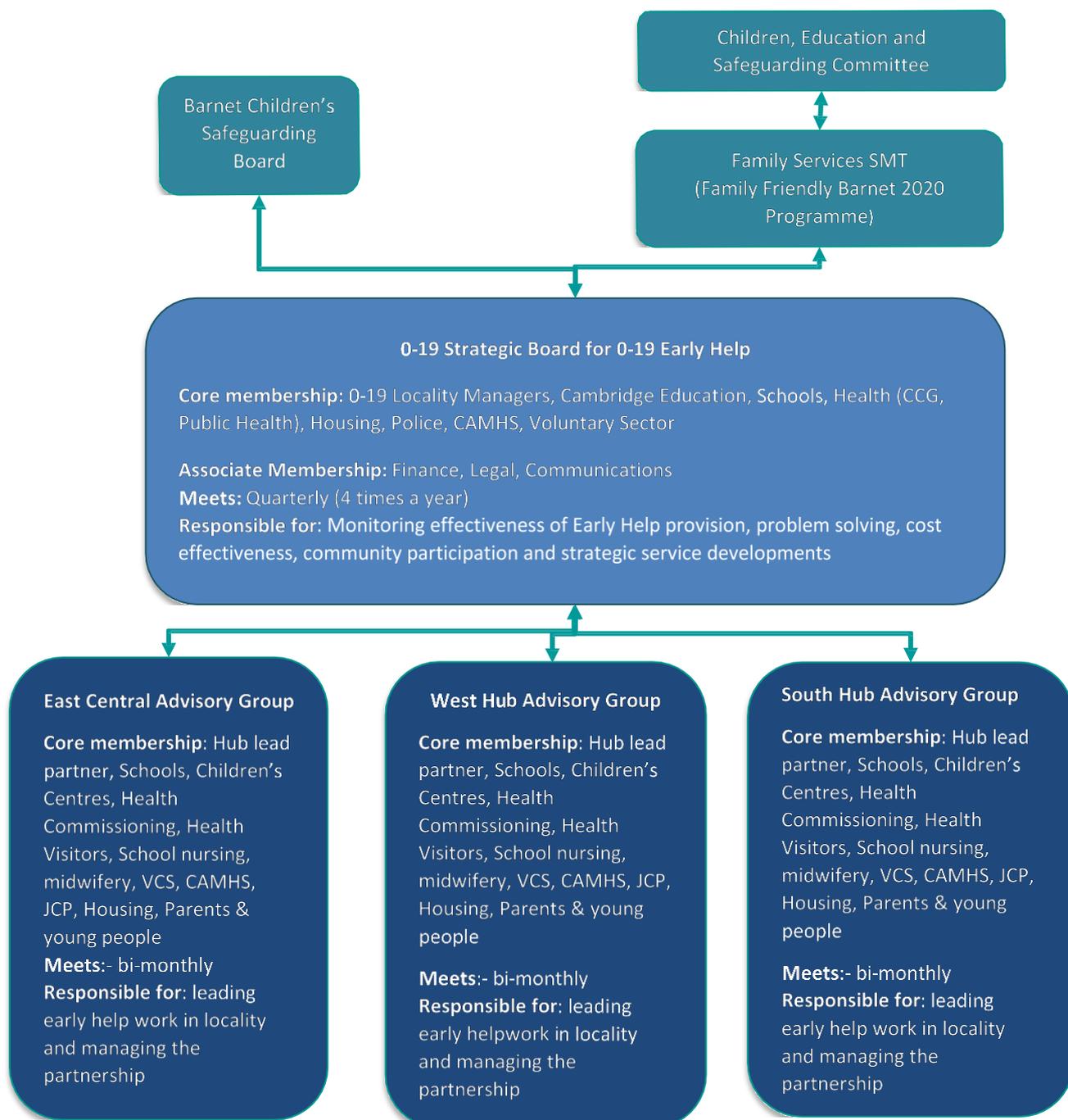
## Appendix 1 - Location of Early Help Hubs



## Appendix 2 – Early Help Assessment Pathway



# Appendix 3 - Governance diagram for Early Help Strategy



# Appendix 4 – Early Help Communications Strategy

## 1-19 Early Help Hub Communication Plan

### **WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?**

- Practitioners delivering Early Help to children, young people and families based in the Council, Children's Centres, Youth Centres, Community Health Services, schools, colleges, Job Centre Plus, Housing, Substance Misuse, Police, SEND, Mental Health Services and voluntary sector.
- Partners delivering general services to all children, young people and families, particularly schools, GPs, voluntary sector agencies
- All current and potential Service Users of Early Help services (specifically Children's Centres, Family Support and Youth Services)
- Councillors

### **WHAT ARE OUR MESSAGE?**

The messages are about:

#### Early Help Services

- What are the Early Help Hubs and where are they?
- What services are available in the borough for children, young people and families
- How you can access them
- Where they take place

#### Early Help Assessments and the role of the Early Help Panel

- What are Early Help Assessments?
- What is a Lead Professional?
- What is a Team Around the Family, and what do they do?
- What is the Early Help Panel?
- The role of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
- What is stepping up and stepping down?

The impact of services

- Do services meet the needs of children, young people and families?
- What works well?
- What needs to improve, and how we will improve it

**COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
<b>COUNCIL STAFF</b>					
Type of media – Newsletter articles					
<b>Staff meetings</b>	As needed	These are either one off or regular staff meetings (e.g. CAF Team Locality Team, Family Resilience Team)	Staff in Early Help, Early Years and Youth Services	Internal	Free
<b>FS Grapevine</b>	Weekly circulation, bi monthly update	Internal Family Services staff newsletter	All Family Services staff	Internal	Free

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
<b>First Team</b>	Circulated two times a week	Council wide newsletter	All Barnet Council staff	Internal	Free
<b>Intranet</b>	Bi monthly update	Council wide intranet	All Barnet Council	Internal	Free
<b>Staff Briefing meetings</b>	Staff briefing – every fortnight	Briefings by SMT to Family Services staff	Family Services	Internal	Free
<b>Union – Staff meetings</b>	As needed	Project team and union meeting to go in depth about progress and impact	Unions and their members	Internal	
<b>Atrium screens</b>	TBC	Screens in reception and canteen	All Barnet Council staff and visitors	Internal	Design cost
<b>Posters - staff toilets/ Noticeboards</b>	TBC		All Barnet Council staff and visitors	Internal	Design cost
<b>RESIDENTS</b>					
<b>Barnet First (Residents)</b>	Monthly	Council magazine	All residents	External	Free

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
<b>Local Papers?</b>	As needed	Local paper	Local paper readership	External	Free
<b>Citizen Portal – Once live</b>	Bi monthly update	Online public facing website	All residents visiting website	External	Free
<b>Leaflets/Posters for public</b>	As needed		Residents in particular sites	External	£30/hour
<b>Social Media – Once live</b>	As needed		All residents/followers of Barnet social media feeds	External	Free
<b>ALL PARTNERS</b>					
<b>Working With Children –</b> <a href="https://www.barnet.gov.uk/wwc-home.html">https://www.barnet.gov.uk/wwc-home.html</a>	Updated bi monthly	Web portal with all information	Practitioners working with families in partner agencies	External	Free
<b>Barnet Safeguarding Children Board Website -</b> <a href="https://thebarnetscp.org.uk/bscp">https://thebarnetscp.org.uk/bscp</a> and Twitter feed	Updated bi monthly	Web portal with all information	Practitioners working with families in partner agencies	External	Free

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
<b>Locality Events</b>	East/Cen - 11 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2018 West - Date TBC South - Date TBC	In person events for locality based professionals to meet and understand hub	Practitioners based in each individual locality	External	Free
<b>SPECIFIC PARTNERS – SCHOOLS</b>					
<b>Weekly School Circular</b>	Weekly	Via Neil Marlow	Headteachers and teams	External	FREE
<b>School Electronic Boards</b>	Update as needed	Via Cambridge Education	All school staff	External	FREE
<b>School Locality Network</b>	Half termly	Via School Locality Chairs	Headteachers	External	FREE
<b>Governors Newsletter</b>	Termly	Via Sarah Beaumont	Governors	External	FREE
<b>Early Years Networks</b>	Update as needed	Via Debra Davies	Early Years Leaders and their teams	External	FREE

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
<b>Director's Briefing for Headteachers</b>	Termly	Via Neil Marlow/Chris Munday	Headteachers	External	FREE
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead Network</b>		Via Siobhan McGovern (CCH head of safeguarding) and Jane Morris – lead for DSLs for education network	Designated Safeguarding Leads in Schools	External	FREE
<b>LA Children's Centre INSET meetings</b>	Termly (can be supplemented by as needed meetings)	Via Locality Managers	Children's Centre staff, both internally and externally	External	FREE
<b>Learning Network Inspector Meetings</b>	Every Week	Via Neil Marlow	Learning Network Inspectors (and subsequently, schools which they work with)	External	FREE
<b>School Improvement Team Meetings</b>	Every half term (last Tuesday of each half-term)		School Improvement Team	External	FREE
<b>SEND?</b>					

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
<b>SPECIFIC PARTNERS – VCS</b>					
<b>VCS Practitioners Forum</b>	Every two months	Via Flo Armstrong and Tony Lewis	VCS organisations working with children	External	FREE
<b>VCS Locality Networks</b>	East Central – 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov  West and South - TBC	Via Janet Matthewson, Young Barnet Foundation	Members of the Young Barnet Foundation	External	FREE
<b>CommUNITY Barnet Newsletter</b>	TBC	Via Jeni Osbourne and Zoe Kattah, Community Barnet	VCS organisations who are part of CommUNITY Barnet	External	FREE
<b>Young Barnet Foundation Newsletter</b>	TBC	Via Janet Matthewson, Young Barnet Foundation	VCS organisations who are part of Young Barnet Foundation	External	FREE
<b>Communities Together Network</b>	Monthly	Via Sophie Leedham	VCS and Faith organisations	External	FREE
<b>SPECIFIC PARTNERS – POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP</b>					

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
<b>Senior Leadership Team</b>	As needed	Via Owain Richards	Police senior leaders	External	FREE
<b>Borough Commander newsletter</b>	As needed	Via Owain Richards	All Police staff	External	FREE
<b>CID safeguarding who will interface with the hubs briefed</b>	As needed	Via Owain Richards	Police Safeguarding Team	External	FREE
<b>Safer Communities Partnership Board</b>	Quarterly	Via Tina McElligott	Partners working to improve Community Safety	External	FREE
<b>SPECIFIC PARTNERS – HEALTH VISITING, FAMILY NURSE PARTNERSHIP, SCHOOL NURSES, CAMHS, MIDWIVES, GPs and COMMISSIONERS</b>					
<b>Care Closer to Home Programme Board</b>	January 2018	Via Nazia Scott  (Dawn Wakeling chair)	Commissioners	External	FREE
<b>BEH CAMHS Team Briefings</b>	As needed	Via Tina Read	BEH CAMHS staff	External	FREE
<b>Community London Community Healthcare</b>	??	??	??	External	FREE
<b>BSCB Health Advisory Group</b>	As needed	Via Siobhan McGovern (CCH	Health Safeguarding Leads	External	FREE

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
		head of safeguarding)			
<b>GP Locality Meetings</b>	West – 16 <sup>th</sup> Nov East/Central – awaiting confirmation South – TBC	Via GP Locality Chair	GPs	External	FREE
<b>CCG/LA Joint Commissioning Unit</b>	As needed	Via Collette McCarthy	Joint Commissioners	Internal	FREE
<b>SPECIFIC PARTNERS - COUNCILLORS</b>					
<b>Meetings with Lead Member</b>	Monthly	Via Yogita Popat	Lead Councillor	Internal	FREE
<b>Members Training</b>	Next phase: November	Via Brigitte Jordaan	Councillors	Internal	FREE
<b>Any other channels?</b>					
<b>SPECIFIC PARTNERS – COMMISSIONED PROVIDERS</b>					
<b>Contract Monitoring Meetings (also via VCS Practitioner Meetings)</b>	Quarterly	Via Varsha Mehta/Maxine Gordon	Commissioned providers	External	FREE

Communication type	Date	Details	Audience	Internal/external	Cost
<b>SPECIFIC PARTNERS – JOB CENTRE PLUS</b>					
<b>Team telekits</b>	Weekly	Via Laura Featley	JCP staff	External	FREE

## **Appendix 5 – Early Help Information Sharing Agreement**

**To be included when final version is confirmed.**