

**AGENDA ITEM: 11**

Pages: 21 - 48

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Meeting	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny
Date	29 <sup>th</sup> February 2012
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Early Intervention and Prevention Children's Services Task and Finish Group – Draft Report</b>
Report of	Scrutiny Office
Summary	This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Early Intervention and Prevention Children's Services Task and Finish Group.

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Officer Contributors	Melissa James, Scrutiny Officer
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Annex 1 – Report of the Early Intervention and Prevention Children's Services Task and Finish Group
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable
Key decision	No

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## **1. RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Members of the Committee consider the findings of the Early Intervention and Prevention Task and Finish Group, as set out in the report attached at Annex 1.**
- 1.2 Members of the Committee discuss and agree the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.**
- 1.3 That agreed findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group are forwarded to the Executive for their consideration.**

## **2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- 2.1 Policy & Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 2 June 2010, Decision 7 (Overview & Scrutiny Appointments) – the Committee to establish a Task and Finish Group on Early Intervention and Prevention services for Children.
- 2.2 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 13 September 2010, Decision 10 (Task and Finish Group Update) – the Sub-Committee appointed members to the Task and Finish Group.
- 2.3 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 1 November 2010, Decision 10 (Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update) – the Sub-Committee received an update on the work of the Task and Finish Group.
- 2.4 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 16 December 2010, Decision 12 (Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update) – the Sub-Committee received an update on the work of the Task and Finish Group.
- 2.5 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 24th January 2011, Decision 12 (Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update) – the Sub-Committee received an update on the work of the Task and Finish Group.
- 2.6 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 28th February 2011, Decision 12 (Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update) – the Sub-Committee received an update on the work of the Task and Finish Group.

## **3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2010/13 Corporate Plan are: –
  - Better services with less money
  - Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities
  - A successful London suburb
- 3.3 The proposals contained within the report of the Task and Finish Group contribute to the 2010/13 Corporate Plan priorities of:

**Better Services with Less Money**, the following strategic objective and performance targets are applicable:

- Invest in early intervention to reduce the number of children and families experiencing complex problems
- Continue to safeguard vulnerable children and adults from avoidable harm at a time of reduced resources.
- A reduction in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system by 5% on the 2009/10 baseline
- A reduction in the number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time from 20% to 12%
- Maintain the number of children with a statement placed in residential or out of borough placements at 38 reducing to 36 by 2012/13

**Sharing Opportunities, Sharing Responsibilities**, the following strategic objectives and top performance targets are applicable:

- Maintain the proportion of young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET) (3.6% 2010/11) below 4.3%
- Increase to 55% the percentage of children in care under 16 that are in council (rather than agency) foster placements.

#### 3.4 **A successful London suburb:**

- Ensure every school is a good school for every child
- Every child in the borough has a reception place

#### 3.5 Barnet Children and Young People Plan 2010/11-2012/13 also has a number of priorities that are applicable to the work of this review:

- Intervene early to strengthen families ensuring the early identification of children and families to enable appropriate preventative interventions through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Identify and protect those most at risk of harm
- Target disadvantaged children and young people to ensure engagement with positive activities
- Prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce re-offending among those who do.

Improve early identification of children and young people who may require additional support to access education, employment and training.

## 4. **RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

### 4.1 None saved those referred to in the report

## 5. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

### 5.1 Barnet has the second largest population of children and young people in London, and is increasingly diverse. Within Barnet's Children and Young People's Plan (2010/11-2012/13) a number of priorities have been identified which aim to improve the outcomes of children and young people living in Barnet.

5.2 There are three themes that underpin the plan: working in partnership, building resilience and supporting independence, and narrowing the gap. These encourage preventative approaches such as intervening early to strengthen families, and ensuring that children and young people regardless of their ethnicity, religion, disability or economic status achieve their full potential.

## **6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

6.1 Two recommendations contained within this report have financial implications and the cost implications are explored below:

6.2 Recommendation two of the Task and Finish Group urges the Cabinet to reconsider the budget reductions to the Educational Psychology service, which they believe will have an adverse impact on the Council's ability to deliver an effective Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy. If Cabinet accepts this recommendation there would be a cost implication. Details are set out in paragraphs 6.3-6.5 below and evidenced in the main report (Pages 6-7).

6.3 In the period 2008 – 2011, in line with the continuing need for savings across the Children's Service, the budget for educational psychologists has reduced by approximately £100k or around 1.5 fte posts.

6.4 The current planned budget for the financial year 2013/14 is based on the intention that the High Incidence Support Team (HIST) service will move to a fully traded basis. There is also an expectation that the significant investment of £1m in 2011/12 for Early Intervention and Prevention would have caused significant costs and activity to be avoided. In this context, alongside reductions in high-cost social care and SEN placements and provision, it should prove possible to reduce the number of Educational Psychologists required by around two posts. This will be kept under review.

6.5 To mitigate fully the current budget proposals in terms of reductions to the Educational Psychology Service would require approximately £120k to be found from savings elsewhere in the Children's Service in 2013/14.

6.6 Recommendation three proposes that all primary schools in the Borough be requested to consider developing Nurture groups. If Cabinet accepts this recommendation there would be a cost implication for schools. Details are set out in paragraphs 6.7-6.9 below and evidence in the main report of the TFG (Pages 9-11)

6.7 Nurture Groups are a form of early intervention for children who might have difficulties in their education because of social and emotional problems. The costs of setting up a nurture group vary depending on the existing resources within schools. However, a report by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (June 2009) identified that a typical nurture group would cost approximately £20k - £23k per annum. This estimate assumed that management time could be provided from within the school's existing resource allocation and that staff would be at SEN 1 level. The report highlighted that staff costs would be an estimated 6% higher if employed on a SEN level 2.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/public/meetings\\_090608\\_cslosp\\_nurture\\_groups\\_report.pdf](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/public/meetings_090608_cslosp_nurture_groups_report.pdf)

Scrutiny & Overview paper from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead with figure for cost of running a Nurture Group

- 6.8 According to the Nurture Group Network, which completed a cost analysis of nurture groups in 1996, there are currently no up to date figures on the costs of setting up and running these groups. The Nurture Network estimates that costs could vary between £30k -£40k with the average cost per child at around £2,845 per annum.
- 6.9 When compared to other forms of provision for children with emotional or behavioural disorders e.g. residential units (costing between £20k-60k) a year per child, or tuition for a child who has a statement for a period of three years, (£12k) excluding the cost of undertaking the statement, the costs of nurture group placements were considerably lower.<sup>2</sup> There is no current Children's Service budgetary provision.
- 6.10 Recommendations one, three, four, five and six proposed by the Task and Finish Group will be contained within the existing approved Children's Service budgets.

## **7. LEGAL ISSUES**

- 7.1 None saved those referred to in the report.

## **8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS**

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).
- 8.3 Item 6 of Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference states that:

"To coordinate and monitor the work of scrutiny panels and task and finish groups, including considering reports and recommendations and referring to the relevant decision-making body."

## **9 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 9.1 The membership of the Early Intervention and Prevention Services for Children Task and Finish Group (TFG) was approved at the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 13 September 2010.
- 9.2 Since being established The TFG met on five occasions. The first meeting took place on the 4 October 2010 to discuss and agree their terms of reference. Councillor Brian Salinger was appointed as Chairman. The Acting Deputy Director for Children's Services attended the meeting and provided an overview of early intervention and prevention services in the borough.
- 9.3 On 10th November 2010, the TFG held a round table discussion with Head Teachers on early intervention and prevention services in schools. On 6 December 2010, a second round table discussion took place with Specialist Practitioners working across the borough.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.nurturegroups.org/data/files/downloads/cost\\_effectiveness\\_of\\_nurture\\_groups.doc](http://www.nurturegroups.org/data/files/downloads/cost_effectiveness_of_nurture_groups.doc)

- 9.4 A further meeting took place on the 5 January 2011 where the TFG met with the Director and Deputy Director of Children's Services to discuss the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy.
- 9.5 On the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011 the Chairman of the TFG met with the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families to discuss the groups findings and recommendations.
- 9.6 The report of the TFG is set out in **Annex 1**. The Committee are requested to discuss and consider the recommendations of the TFG, and for these to be forwarded for consideration at the next possible meeting of Cabinet.

## **10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 None.

**Legal: MB**

**CFO: MC/JH**

**Early Intervention and Prevention  
(Children's Services) Task and Finish  
Group**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Family profiling and family intervention should be prioritised within the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy as these will deliver greater long term savings for the council. Cabinet are requested to provide information on the prioritisation of these elements in the Strategy and anticipated cost/benefits.
2. The Task and Finish Group recognise the importance of the work of Educational Psychology and express concern that the planned reductions in the service might affect the Council's ability to deliver an effective Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, and request that the Cabinet reconsider.
3. The Task and Finish Group recognises Nurture Groups as an important method of intervening early and recommend that Children's Services engage with all primary schools in the Borough to encourage them to utilise their existing resources to develop Nurture Groups, with the outcome of these discussions being reported to the Task and Finish Group at the earliest opportunity.
4. The Task and Finish Group recognise the importance of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in delivering the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and recommend that Children's Service undertake urgent discussions with the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust about the role of CAMHS and the level of service available to support young people in Barnet.
5. The Children's Service review the effectiveness of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the Multi-Agency Group (MAG) in Barnet and report it's findings to the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee within the next 6 months.
6. Children's Services consider how children and family exit the early intervention process by developing criteria for agreed exit strategies.



## **1. Background Information**

1.1 In October 2010, a Task and Finish Group commenced a review into Early Intervention and Prevention Children's Services in Barnet. The review took place between October 2010 and January 2011.

1.2 The Task and Finish Group comprised the following Councillors:

- Councillor Brian Salinger (Chairman)
- Councillor Barry Rawlings
- Councillor Sury Khatri
- Councillor Kath McGuirk
- Councillor Tom Davey

1.3 Following consultation with Children's Service officers, the following scope and purpose of the review was agreed:

- How the Council could maximise the effectiveness of early intervention for children and young people in Barnet; and
- The Council's draft Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy.

## **2. Review Format**

2.1 During the course of the review, the Task and Finish Group undertook a series of evidence gathering meetings with key stakeholders in the delivering early intervention and prevention services in Barnet including:

- Head Teachers; and
- Specialist Practitioner (Children's Service).

2.2 The evidence gathering sessions were supported by:

- An analysis of the legislative framework and government policy;
- Consideration of Barnet's Early Intervention and Prevention Services including: Barnet Schools; Parenting Programmes; Educational Psychology; the Safer Families Project; Youth Support Services; Youth Connexions; Youth Offending Team; Targeted Youth Support Panels; and Restorative Approaches in Schools.
- Consideration of process that support early intervention including: the Common Assessment Framework; Multi-Agency Groups; and Family Profiling.

### **3. Legislative Framework, Government Policy and the Early Intervention**

- 3.1 The Laming Report<sup>1</sup> into the death of Victoria Climbié highlighted the need to identify early children who may be at risk and in need of support and protection. It emphasised the importance of effective multi-agency work and a consistent approach to service provision. In response the government published the Every Child Matters Green Paper (2003)<sup>2</sup> and introduced the Children's Act 2004<sup>3</sup>. Together these signalled a policy shift and refocusing of children's services towards prevention, early identification and wellbeing.
- 3.2 Effective early intervention was seen to be dependent upon a highly skilled workforce, more integrated services and greater accountability. The Children's Act 2004 stipulated a number of requirements to support this and led to structural changes within the organisation of children's services. A new duty was also placed on local authorities to co-operate with partner agencies to ensure that joint working to safeguard the welfare of children takes place.
- 3.3 In 2007, following the publication of the Children's Plan<sup>4</sup>, a target was set for Children's Trust Boards to have in place by 2010/11 arrangements for early intervention. This was reinforced by the Schools White Paper 2009<sup>5</sup> which stipulated that early intervention arrangements should be set out in Children and Young People's Plans (CYPP) and implemented by Children's Trust partners. The 2008 publication 'Think Family: Improving the Life Chances of Families at Risk'<sup>6</sup> also highlighted the importance of promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children, with a greater emphasis placed on adopting a whole family approach.
- 3.4 However, following the death of Baby Peter, a review by Lord Laming on child protection in England<sup>7</sup> in 2009 demonstrated that, despite progress in the development of multi agency services for children and families and strong local strategic leadership, more early intervention was still needed. Laming's report highlighted that early intervention remained essential for strengthening children's services and improving outcomes for children.
- 3.5 An independent review on the future of early intervention programmes (Early Intervention Next Steps' 2011)<sup>8</sup> recommended that a national body should be set up to oversee the operation and funding of early intervention programmes throughout the UK. Other key recommendations included:
  - The establishment of 15 local early intervention 'places' to spearhead the development of best practice; and
  - The support and expansion of the top 19 early intervention programmes deemed to be the most effective.

- 3.6 There is a lack of agreement on definitions used to describe the work of early intervention and it is often used to describe a range of activities. However, in 2007 the Department for Education and Skills defined early intervention as: *“Intervening as soon as possible to tackle problems that have already emerged for children and young people”*<sup>9</sup> (2009:8)
- 3.7 In Barnet, early intervention applies to children and young people of all ages and it is used to *‘prevent their needs from increasing, however complex their needs may currently be’*. Barnet’s Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy (2010) outlines that services are being refocused to become more preventative to ensure that resources are used to prevent children and young people’s problems from becoming worse, requiring higher level and more costly interventions at a later stage. The Strategy sets out a range of strategic objectives and approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.8 Nationally the research evidence on the outcomes of early intervention and prevention work are at an early stage (Social Work Research Centre, 2004)<sup>10</sup>. Despite international recognition that early intervention can be beneficial to children and families, its effectiveness is reported to be largely based on reflective commentaries, programme evaluations and academic research. The Government’s recent independent review also confirmed that successful evidence based intervention programmes were patchy. (DFE; 2011<sup>11</sup>)
- 3.9 Nevertheless, the evidence to support the cost benefits of this approach are well documented. The Department of Education and Skills case for early intervention highlighted that the high cost of non-intervention when compared to the lower costs of intervening early, clearly showed that early intervention was often a better approach<sup>12</sup> (DFE, 2009:19)
- 3.10 This was supported by the Government’s independent review (DFE; 2011) which highlighted that early interventions can provide significantly better outcomes for young people and be more cost effective than later and more intensive interventions.
- 3.11 However, it is important to be aware that there are barriers to early intervention particularly:
- Some organisations investing in early intervention may see that benefits are accrued to other services/agencies rather than their own;
  - The difficulty in demonstrating causality or proving that certain events (often negative) have not happened; and
  - That the benefits of early intervention may take years to realise and could require further support at a later stage.
- 3.12 Regardless of the cost benefit analysis of this approach, the main motivation for adopting an early intervention approach is to ensure that children and families with emerging difficulties are identified and

supported before these become entrenched and cause significant long term damage, with potentially significant costs for the local authority and wider public sector.

#### **4. Barnet's Early Intervention and Prevention Services**

- 4.1 As part of this review, the Task and Finish Group (TFG) explored how services are intervening early to support children and young people in Barnet. During the review, Members held two round table discussions with Head Teachers and Specialist Practitioners (Children's Service). A number of early intervention and prevention services across the Borough were identified, with these often being delivered in partnership or close collaboration with others. The TFG findings below reflect some of their discussions with these groups.

##### **Barnet Schools**

- 4.2 Members received evidence from primary school Head Teachers regarding their approach to delivering an early intervention approach. During the round table discussion with Head Teachers, the TFG heard that delivering early intervention within primary schools was challenging due to teachers having to manage the needs of a classroom of children and the needs of a child requiring early intervention support. These demands often limited a teacher's ability to effectively apply early intervention approaches, which they acknowledged were of great value, but often difficult to address within a classroom setting.
- 4.3 Some primary school Head Teachers informed the Group that there were pressures around respite provision<sup>13</sup> within the Borough, and that they felt that it was sometimes difficult to access support for children with identified additional needs who were not excluded from school.
- 4.4 TFG Members questioned whether Nurture Groups had been utilised as part of the early intervention approach. Nurture Groups<sup>14</sup> provide proven effective learning environments for children who are vulnerable to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. These were perceived by some Head Teachers as an accepted alternative environment for children requiring early intervention outside the classroom. Nurture Groups were described as allowing children to develop social skills and preventing them from becoming problematic. They were seen as an important environment for staff to identify a child's level of emotional intelligence.
- 4.5 The TFG were informed by Head Teachers that Nurture Groups were particularly effective for children in years three and four. However, it was noted the success of these Groups was dependent upon the availability of regular staff for children to develop trusting relationships with. The process of reintegrating children back into the classroom often involved reducing the amount of time a child spent at Nurture Groups over an agreed period of time and often with the involvement of their parents.

- 4.6 Research has shown that the costs of setting up a nurture group varies depending on the level of resources available within schools. A report by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (June 2009) identified that a typical nurture group could cost between £20,000-£23,000 per annum. A cost analysis undertaken by the Nurture Group Network estimated a higher cost citing between £30k – £40k to set up a group with the average cost per child being £2,845 per annum.
- 4.7 The TFG considered the costs of setting up Nurture Groups compared to other forms of provision for children with emotional or behavioural disorders. They noted that the costs for residential units (estimated at £20k- 60k per child per year or tuition for a child who has a statement for a period of three years ( estimated at a cost of £12k)were much higher than the costs of setting up and placing a child in a nurture group.

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Task and Finish Group recognises Nurture Groups as an important method of intervening early and recommend that Children's Services engage with all primary schools in the Borough to encourage them to utilise their existing resources to develop Nurture Groups, with the outcome of these discussions being reported to the Task and Finish Group at the earliest opportunity.

- 4.8 During the round table discussion with headteachers, the TFG noted that Children's Centres were perceived as useful in engaging parents and getting their participation in initiatives that supported early intervention, such as parental guidance lessons. The TFG were informed that these centres were perceived by parents as non-threatening and an effective environment for encouraging their co-operation in early intervention strategies, particularly when offered as part of a wider programme of activities.
- 4.9 In general, schools were identified as having an important role in delivering early intervention work. The TFG learnt that since September 2010, all schools in the Borough have been expected to provide access to a core range of extended services based on the core offer comprising the following:
- High quality 'wraparound' childcare for primary aged children available 8am-6pm, 48 weeks per year;
  - Secondary schools open from 8am-6pm all year round, providing access to a range of activities, study support and a 'Youth Offer';
  - Parenting support and family learning;
  - Swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services (e.g. speech therapy, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)); and

- Providing wider community access to ICT, sports and arts facilities, and adult learning

4.10 The Extended Schools Initiative was set up to:

- Improve pupil attainment, self-confidence, motivation and attendance;
- Reduce exclusion rates; and
- Enhance Children's and families access to services, as well as make good use of community resources.

4.11 As part of Ofsted's School Inspections, extended schools services are assessed on their contribution to improved outcomes for children and young people.

4.12 Although the council continues to provide advice to schools around the sustainability of the core offer and administers and monitors the grant revenue funding that supports this agenda, schools are now primarily responsible for delivering these services.

4.13 The TFG noted that in support of the extended service agenda, schools also received an Activity Support Grant to ensure that children and young people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds have an equal opportunity to access extended services. Schools allocated these funds at their own discretion using their knowledge of their pupils and their families. In March 2011, the Activity Support Grant was replaced by the Pupil Premium, which schools distribute without any monitoring via the local authority.

### **Parenting Programmes**

4.14 The TFG met with the Strategic Parenting Support Manager and were informed that parenting programmes were also sometimes used in schools and that their impact was nationally recognised. Parenting programmes were delivered in conjunction with Children's and Youth Offending Services. Barnet has a number of specialist Parenting Practitioners whose skills were in high demand. These Practitioners are skilled in supporting children with specialist needs such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and their support was described by Parents and Schools as making a difference to the development of children and young people's learning and social skills. Parenting Practitioners also worked closely with the Youth Offending Team to provide support to parents and carers of young people who were offending or at risk of offending.

4.15 The TFG noted that Parenting Teams were perceived by Parenting Practitioners as having an important role in early intervention due to their direct engagement with families. The TFG were informed that across Barnet, many families were being referred to Parenting Practitioners

rather than Social Workers due to perceptions of them as having a more non-judgemental approach to problems in the home.

### **Educational Psychology**

- 4.16 The TFG met with the Principal Educational Psychologist and were informed that educational psychology was linked to a number of early intervention processes, despite the service traditionally supporting children with special needs or a disability. Most Educational Psychologists managed the intervention and review process of approximately 2.2% of children who had been provided with a statement of Special Educational Needs in Barnet. Additionally, they contributed to the monitoring of out of borough placements. Educational Psychologist spend a large percentage of their time working with schools to prevent the need for statutory assessment and advising on the appropriate intervention for the effective inclusion of a wide range of children with needs.
- 4.17 The Principal Educational Psychologist emphasised the importance of successful consultation practice with services such as the Family Intervention Project and the Youth Offending Teams to ensure that resources were maximised, and that an effective and strong virtual team was in place to support schools. Educational Psychologists perceived schools as playing an important role in the Preventing Exclusion Initiative, aimed at reducing the number of exclusions across the borough, and informed the TFG that this has shown some success. The TFG noted that plans to develop this initiative into a team around the setting model for schools and children's centres, to support the work of the Multi Agency Groups and promote multi-agency working had been put in place.
- 4.18 The TFG were informed that although most schools were keen to retain the services of educational psychologists, it was felt that more preventative work might be able to be undertaken if the statutory assessment rate could be reduced. Recent initiatives such as the introduction of the 'Every Child Practitioner Tool' (which supported the management of problem behaviour children in partnership with other practitioners) was an example of the type of work that could be further developed.
- 4.19 The TFG considered the budget for the Children's service for 2010-2012 which showed that £1 million pounds would be allocated to early intervention services. This investment in early intervention projects was also confirmed during a meeting with the Director and Deputy Director of the Children's Service. The TFG welcomed the investment and sought assurance that the current level of early intervention services would continue, in addition to further investment in other early intervention initiatives. In particular, The TFG were concerned about the planned reductions in the educational psychology service as it was highly regarded by both Head teachers and other support staff.

- 4.20 The TFG perceived the role of the educational psychology service as paramount in providing support in schools, especially for children with emotional and behavioural needs at a very early stage. They felt that the service reductions might affect the council's ability to effectively deliver its early intervention strategy.
- 4.21 The TFG considered the Educational Psychology budget in detail and the service level changes. The Chairman also sought further information on the current support provided by the Educational Psychology service to primary and secondary Schools and the Pupil Referral Unit in the borough.
- 4.22 The TFG learnt that the educational psychology service had become a partly traded service requiring schools to purchase additional educational psychology support to meet specific needs and priorities. The TFG acknowledged that there were some benefits to this approach, such as enabling schools, and other agencies to purchase EPS Services as required and enabling service levels to be agreed in advance. However, the group also recognised some of the difficulties with this approach such as schools having to respond to unexpected demands for the service should additional children be identified with behavioural support needs and the requirement for schools to know how to identify how this support could be used effectively.
- 4.23 The TFG's analysis of the educational psychology budget showed a year on year budget reduction for educational psychology services in Barnet. The budget for the educational psychology service comprises the combined spends on Behaviour Support Teachers and Educational Psychologists (See Table 1 below).

Table 1: Educational Psychologist Budget 2009-2012

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Educational Psychology Service Budget</b>
2009-2010	£1,353,970
2010-2011	£1,296,980
2011-2012	£1,087,190

- 4.24 The educational psychology budget for 2011/ 2012 as set out in the council's Children's service budget represented the third consecutive year of budgetary cuts . In total, the Educational Psychology service had seen an overall budget reduction of £266,760 over a three year period.
- 4.25 In the period 2008-2011 in line with the continuing need for savings



across the Children's Service the budget for educational psychologist had been cut by approximately £100k, the equivalent of 1.5 fte posts. In 2010-2011 the service lost two educational psychologist posts. The current proposed budget for 2011/12 has led to the loss of three full time Behaviour Support Teachers, with the retention of 1.6 fte post that is partly being funded through a traded service with Schools.

- 4.26 The TFG were concerned about the budget reduction as there was no evidence to show that the demand for these services had decreased over this period and the testimonies of teachers and other professional staff indicated the importance of their role in early intervention. The projected growth of the special educational needs child population by 20% not only confirmed the TFG concerns of the need to maintain the 2010 pre budget levels of EP services but also ensure the future provision to manage this demographic growth.
- 4.27 The TFG noted that to mitigate fully the current budget in terms of reductions to the educational Psychology service, approximately £120k would need to be found from savings elsewhere in the Children's Service in 2012/14. The TFG urge that the Cabinet re-consider the current plans for the educational psychology service and identify reductions elsewhere in the budget.

#### **Recommendation 2**

The Task and Finish Group recognise the importance of the work of Educational Psychology and express concern that the planned reductions in the service might affect the Council's ability to deliver an effective Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, and request that the Cabinet reconsider.

#### **Safer Families Project**

- 4.28 The TFG were informed by officers from the Children's Service that Barnet had also developed a specialist project team to support young children who had witnessed or were vulnerable to domestic violence. The 'Safer Families Project' had been set up in 2009/10 following a significant increase in referrals involving Domestic violence (DV). The project aims to support children and families affected by domestic abuse, but who did not meet the thresholds required for social care intervention. The Council had recruited three new Domestic Violence Workers to work within the Children's Service to manage the increasing numbers of children and families requiring support as a result of domestic violence.
- 4.29 The Safer Families Project Team were based at two Children's Centres, on opposite sides of the borough (Newstead in East Finchley; and The Hyde in Hendon) as these areas are known to have a high level of DV incidents. The Hyde Project worked with families with

children up until the age of 11 years, and the Newstead Project was open to children and their families up until the age of 5 years old. The Safer Families Project also engaged with a wide range of DV support agencies<sup>15</sup> and partners, such as CAMHS, Father's Workers and Children's Centre Workers.

- 4.30 The TFG heard that in September 2010, the Children's Service had completed a discreet evaluation project that examined the outcomes of the work of the Domestic Violence Team. A random sample of 80 domestic violence cases for the period of 2009 and 2010 had been analysed which showed that over three quarters of the cases intercepted by DV workers did not progress beyond an initial assessment, thus providing the Referral and Assessment Team Social Workers with more capacity to deal with other cases. The research also demonstrated that less than one fifth of the cases dealt with by DV worker were re-referred, suggesting that the early intervention by DV workers was effective and of a high quality.

### **Youth Support**

- 4.31 In addition to providing early intervention support for children at a very young age, the TFG were informed by officers within the Children's Service that early intervention also took place with young people during their adolescence. The council provided an Integrated Youth Support Service which offered services across the borough for young people who may be experiencing difficulties at home or school, at risk of offending, or those at risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET).

### **Youth Connexions**

- 4.32 The TFG met with the Head of the Youth Connexions Service and examined the services available for young people through Barnet's Youth and Connexions Service. The TFG were informed that the Service was staffed by 18 Connexions Personal Advisers. These Advisers provide a range of information, advice and guidance services in a number of settings across the Borough.
- 4.33 Youth Workers accepted referrals from all agencies and identified any difficulties a young person may be experiencing. There were no restrictions in terms of the types of young people they support and any young person could be referred. The Youth Connexions Service undertakes a holistic approach to the assessment of needs which assists in identifying the appropriate agencies that may be able to provide the support needed. The TFG were informed that this approach may change in the future due to the focus on targeting the most vulnerable children and young people.

## **Youth Offending Team**

- 4.34 The TFG learnt that the Youth Offending Team also offers a range of preventative services to reduce the number of young people getting involved in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. These services include a project known as 'N-able', comprising several key workers who work with young people at risk of offending from the ages of 8 to 17 years for a period of six months. These key workers undertake assessments to identify risk and factors associated with offending, and complete a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or other Support Plan to determine how best to support that young person. Other support provided includes finding suitable activities for young people to get involved in, 1:1 counselling on anger management, confidence and self-esteem building, as well as advocacy and facilitated access to a range of voluntary and statutory services. Barnet's Youth Offending Service also has a Parent Support Worker attached to its service. This practitioner provides support to parents of young people at risk of offending.

## **Targeted Youth Support Panels**

- 4.35 The TFG were informed by the Head of Connexions Service that Targeted Youth Support Panels comprise several professional groups including the Police. They were coterminous with the police sector and receive referrals from different agencies such as housing, schools, and the voluntary sector. Targeted Youth Support Panels were closely aligned to an Early Identification Panel that works to support the early identification of young people who may be vulnerable to crime or victims of crime. This Panel operates across the Borough and also works to prevent a young person at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity.

## **Restorative Approaches in Schools**

- 4.36 As part of the Youth Offending Service Preventative Programme, direct advice and training was also available to schools. The Restorative Programme aimed to educate young people about the negative effects of bullying and anti-social behaviour and why this behaviour is unacceptable. The Programme has trained a number of staff from each school on restorative approaches which are shared and embedded across their schools. There are presently 19 schools involved in this programme, including two secondary schools and a pupil referral unit. The project is run by a Co-ordinator who provides advice, support and training on restorative approaches and encourages schools to develop a 'whole school' approach to restorative practice.

## **5. Processes that Support Early Intervention**

- 5.1 The TFG were informed by Children Service Officers that there were two key processes that were being used in the Borough across all

## **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**

- 5.2 During the two round table discussions with Headteachers and Specialist Practitioners the TFG heard that the CAF was a shared assessment and planning framework for use across all children's and young people's services for carrying out an assessment of a child with additional needs. The CAF standardised the approach to the assessment and early identification of children's additional needs and how those needs should be met. It was designed to assist practitioners to share their assessment findings with others, and co-ordinate appropriate service provision across a range of agencies. The TFG were informed that the CAF was a completely voluntary process and the parents, child/young person must agree to be assessed for a CAF to be used.
- 5.3 At the time of the review, the TFG were informed that 551 CAF's had been completed in Barnet. The CAF Coordinator's update report (February 2011) showed that school based staff were the highest CAF initiators, accounting for 33% of all CAF's in the Borough. This was followed by primary care health staff (15%), Children's Centers (10%), the voluntary sector (8%) and Youth and Connexions staff. In 2010, Housing Needs Officers also received training in the CAF as part of the Council's new holistic Housing Needs Assessment process to ensure that the additional needs of children are identified.
- 5.4 During the course of the review the TFG heard different opinions and attitudes towards the use of the CAF. Head Teachers participating in the round table discussion questioned the value of the CAF, particularly in circumstances where interventions were already in place. They also raised the issue of family/parent co-operation in order to undertake a CAF which in their experience could be problematic.
- 5.5 Specialist Practitioners though described the CAF as important in facilitating greater understanding and communication with other practitioners, which helped them to co-ordinate appropriate support for young vulnerable people.

## **Multi-Agency Groups (MAGS)**

- 5.6 The TFG met with the Multi-Agency Support Manager and heard that MAGS are multi-agency groups comprised of managers from all key partner agencies. They are run by the Multi-Agency Support Team, a division of the Children's Service Building Resilience and Supporting Independence Team. MAGS meet every month in the boroughs network areas to discuss individual cases (CAFs) and identify solutions. Each member of the multi-agency group ensures that

- 5.7 MAGS provide strategic lead and oversight of the CAFs in each area by ensuring that early interventions using the CAF are working effectively. This includes monitoring and ensuring that CAF Action Plans are on track and that lead professionals are in place, as well as addressing any professional differences and family engagement issues.
- 5.8 At the time of the review, MAG's were at an early stage in their development, making an assessment of their value in delivering early intervention and prevention services difficult.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Children's Service review the effectiveness of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the Multi-Agency Group (MAG) in Barnet and report it's findings to the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee within the next 6 months.

### **Family Profiling**

- 5.9 The TFG learnt from their discussions with Specialist Practitioners and Children Service officers that the use of Whole Family Assessment processes to identify the needs of families with multiple problems had been undertaken as part of a pilot project by a number of local authorities testing family focused models. One of the distinguishing features of the Family Assessment Processes was that the inter-relationships between family members and how these impact on individuals within the family are examined. (DFE; 2010) Evidence from this research showed that a range of positive outcomes had been identified including: a reduction in family risk levels which often stopped the escalation of child protection issues; and swifter identification of child protection concerns.
- 5.10 The TFG were informed by officers that the Family Intervention Project (FIP) model was the preferred model of intervention and that investing in a system that prevents families from requiring higher levels of needs, would be an important addition to Barnet's Early Intervention Programme in the future.

### **Recommendation 4**

Family profiling and family intervention should be prioritised within the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy as these will deliver greater long term savings for the council. Cabinet are requested to provide

information on the prioritisation of these elements in the Strategy and anticipated cost/benefits.
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## **6. Barnet's Early Intervention Strategy**

- 6.1 The TFG met with the Director of Children's Services and the Deputy Director of Children's Services and were informed that many of the early intervention projects taking place across the borough had been grant funded. In 2011-12 an additional £1 million had been invested in early intervention programmes, with the expectation that over a period of three years, £2 million per annum would be saved through a decrease in the need for more costly and higher level interventions.
- 6.2 The TFG examined the draft Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and felt that overall the aims and objectives of the Strategy were good. They believed that the Strategy could support the effective delivery of early intervention programmes across the borough and were encouraged by the preventative work currently taking place.
- 6.3 However, the TFG felt that aspects of the Strategy could be strengthened by showing more clearly how partnerships around Children's Services worked together and the role of the voluntary sector in delivering early intervention programmes. Members also suggested that early intervention programmes, such as the Safer Family Project, should be included within the Strategy.
- 6.4 The TFG also sought further information on the role of colleges and higher educational institutes in early intervention initiatives. They were informed that the Council was in close liaison with the Middlesex University Trust on potential vocational courses and the expansion of apprenticeships to include provision for young people with learning difficulties. Work was also underway to look at the possibility of developing Family Intervention Practitioners (FIP) as a new profession.
- 6.5 In terms of greater involvement with local colleges, the TFG were informed that a number of children from Pupil Referral Units had been successfully placed on local college courses. However, officers acknowledged that further development work could be undertaken to ensure that there was appropriate early intervention provision in Barnet, which could help to reduce the number of young people placed in out of borough placements.
- 6.6 The TFG sought further information on the role of the Child and Adolescence Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and its reduced involvement in early intervention services. They were informed by the Director of Children's Services that the support of CAMHS was good throughout the Borough and that there was a CAMHS worker supporting several services. The TFG expressed concerns about the

- 6.7 The TFG recognised the importance of the work of CAMHS and felt that it was important that Children's Services effectively engaged with Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust to ensure that the current level of service available to support young people with mental health needs in Barnet were maintained.

**Recommendation 5**

The Task and Finish Group recognise the importance of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in delivering the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and recommend that Children's Service undertake urgent discussions with the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust about the role of CAMHS and the level of service available to support young people in Barnet.

- 6.8 Whilst the TFG felt that the Strategy showed many entry points for children and families needing early intervention support, they felt that work could be undertaken on an exit strategy for parents and service providers should they wish to 'leave' a process or decide that the intervention is not meeting identified needs. Members felt that the Strategy needed to consider how support could be withdrawn and for this to be reflected in the final document.

**Recommendation 6**

Children's Services consider how children and family exit the early intervention process by developing criteria for agreed exit strategies.

- 6.9 In the final analysis, the TFG are fully supportive of the early intervention programmes taking place across the borough. Members viewed early intervention as an investment that could lead to a better quality of life and greater opportunities for children and young people at risk or those with additional needs.
- 6.10 In terms of the processes used to support early intervention such as the CAF and the MAG, the TFG would like to ensure that every effort is made to prevent these from becoming overcomplicated and bureaucratic. These processes are important to the delivery of the Early Intervention Strategy and ensuring that more effective multi-agency working takes place across the borough.

- 6.11 The TFG welcomed the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and recommend that it is communicated and publicised to all practitioners and multi-agency groups working in the borough to ensure that its aims and objectives can be achieved.
- 6.12 Members also supported the use of a Whole Family Assessment Model and believed that where early interventions were needed, it was important that the right approach was used for the whole family and not just the individual.



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## End notes

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<sup>1</sup> The Lord Laming (2003) The Victoria Climbié Report. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.

<sup>2</sup> HM Government, 2003, Every Child Matters

<sup>3</sup> HM Government, 2004, The Children's Act

<sup>4</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007, The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures

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<sup>6</sup> Social Exclusion Task Force (2008) Think Family: Improving the life chances of families at risks, London: Cabinet Office.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord Laming, 2009, The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report

<sup>8</sup> Cabinet Office (2011) Early Intervention Next Steps: An Independent Report for Her Majesty's Government. Graham Allen MP.

<sup>9</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families, (2009) Early Intervention: Securing Good Outcomes for All Children and Young People

<sup>10</sup> Social Work Research Centre, University of Stirling (2004) The Statutory Social Worker's role in prevention and early intervention with Children.

<sup>11</sup> Cabinet Office (2011) Early Intervention next steps: An independent report for her majesty's government. Graham Allen MP.

<sup>12</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families, (2009) Early Intervention: securing good outcomes for all children and young people

<sup>13</sup> Respite Provision is any activity or service of a limited duration designed to provide a break for a dependant person and their carer/family from the responsibilities and pressures of the usual routine of caring.

<sup>14</sup> Nurture Groups are a form of early intervention for children who might have difficulties in their education because of social and emotional problems. They provide a safe environment, help build a child's self-esteem, foster trust and provide a safe, healthy environment in which the child can engage in learning.

<sup>15</sup> Barnet Sanctuary Project, Elevate, Jewish Woman's Support Aid and BME DV agencies.

### PROJECT PLAN

<b>Topic for Review</b>	<b>Early intervention and prevention services for Children</b>
Membership	Councillor Brian Salinger (Chairman) Councillor Sury Khatri Councillor Tom Davey Councillor Kath McGuirk Councillor Barry Rawlings
Link to Corporate Plan	A key strategic objective within the Corporate Plan and Barnet's Children and Young People Plan 2010/11-2012/13 is to build resilience and support independence by taking a preventative approach. This includes intervening early to strengthen families and to ensure that children and young people are able to achieve their potential.
Background	03/06/2010 Decisions of the Policy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee: That a Task and Finish Group be established on Early Intervention and Prevention services for Children.
Scope and Purpose of Review	The review will consider 1) How the Council could maximise the effectiveness of early intervention for children and young people in Barnet 2) The Council's draft early intervention and prevention strategy.
Format of Review	Methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny office to conduct desk research</li> <li>• Members to meet with Barnet Council officers and multi-agency groups</li> <li>• Best practice</li> </ul>

Key Evidence (internal & external)	<p><b>Documents required</b> LB Barnet Early Intervention Strategy</p> <p><b>Witnesses/stakeholders</b> Cllr Andrew Harper, Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families Robert McCullough Graham- Director of Children's Service Jay Mercer, Deputy Director of Children's Service Terry Redmayne, Deputy Director of Children's Service Stav Yiannou - Divisional Manager, BRSI Michaela Carlowe, Multi- agency Support Manager Flo Armstrong, Divisional Manager, Youth and Connexions Stuart Collins, Youth Offending Service Manager Karin Ridout, Strategic Parenting Support Manager Brian Davis, Principal Educational Psychologist</p> <p>Other:- Head teachers and Lead Officers from a selection of schools and Educational/Children's Centres in Barnet</p>
Timescales	Overview and Scrutiny arrangements recommend that Task and Finish Groups should be completed within a timescale of three months. It is envisaged that this review be completed by 1 <sup>st</sup> March with an update reported to the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2011.
Expected Outcomes	The Task and Finish Group will make up to four clear and concise SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) recommendations to the Council's Cabinet
Follow up	Implementation of recommendations are monitored by the Scrutiny Office