

Task and Finish Group Review:

Early Years Provision

Final Report

January 2014

Executive Summary:

This Task and Finish Group was set up as the result of a decision by the Barnet Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee in early 2012.

The Task and Finish Group was originally commissioned to consider Children's Centres. However, Members took the opportunity to expand the remit of their review to cover wider aspects of early years' provision, as well as Children's Centres.

The remit of the Task and Finish Group was to formally feed in on the first phase of an internal review of early years' provision that was being conducted by the Children's Service, and provide non-executive Member input into the Council Policy on early years' provision in Barnet.

The Task and Finish Group were provided with a wide range of data from on-going reviews, including the information and recommendations arising from the Hempsalls' Review of Children's Centres and the market research that arose from the 2013 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Additionally, the Group undertook to visit a large number of childcare providers from within the Borough and a Children's Centre considered to be an example of best practice in Brighton.

The Recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group are as follows:

- 1) To focus on early years provision development in areas where demographic changes mean there are gaps in childcare provision. This is an issue in both the South and West of the borough, especially Colindale, Golders Green and West Hendon.
- 2) To re-focus resources to improve early years support in the most deprived areas of the Borough and for the most vulnerable families in the Borough.
- 3) To recommend the integration of health professionals into Children's Centres.
- 4) To develop a sustainable funding solution for nursery schools and that the Schools Forum be informed of the view of this Task and Finish Group.

The Council's Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be requested to consider and scrutinise this report, before its recommendations being formally received by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet will be requested to provide a formal response to the recommendations when the report of the Group is presented to them. In order to track approved recommendations, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or its successor Committee following the Change of Governance arrangements from Annual Council 2014) will monitor the implementation the above recommendations (if accepted).

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1. **Background**

- 1.1 In early 2012, the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Group (TFG) review on the following basis:

“To undertake an in-depth analysis of the role of Children’s Centres and their contribution to delivering the Council’s Early Intervention Strategy and supporting the Safer Families Project.”

- 1.2 In accordance with established practice, the Scrutiny Office engaged with the relevant service area to establish the current position in relation to the services in scope for the review.

- 1.3 In February 2013, the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee received representations from Children’s Service officers who recommended that the start of the Group be deferred as the Children’s Service were about to commence an internal review of Early Years provision (including Children’s Centres) and had recently commissioned an external evaluation study to support this review which had not yet been completed. On that basis, the Committee agreed that the commencement of this TFG review be deferred until April/May 2013 to enable the Group to utilise the data obtained from this external review.

The Members appointed to the TFG were:

Councillor Brian Gordon (Chairman)
Councillor Kate Salinger
Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb
Councillor John Marshall
Councillor Andreas Ioannidis

The Substitute Members were:

Councillor Hugh Rayner
Councillor Ansuya Sodha,
Councillor Gill Sargeant

- 1.4 The purpose of this TFG review was amended to incorporate an on-going internal review into Early Years provision rather than to just consider a standalone review of Children’s Centres.

- 1.5 The internal Early Years review is currently being conducted by the Children’s Service, and commenced in early 2013 with the aim of aiding the Council and its partners in identifying how improvements could be made to early years’ provision in Barnet, whether they were state or privately provided. At the time of this report, the Children’s Service had completed the first phase of their analysis and the Member comments made throughout this piece of work will feed into the wider strategy for Early Years Provision which is expected to be approved in mid-2014.

- 1.6 The key objectives of the internal Phase One review were to:

- Understand early years provision in Barnet;
- Identify best practice; and
- Develop recommendations for improvement.

The Internal review used the following sources of data to inform their review:

1.7 The Externally Commissioned Hemsalls' Review of Children's Centres:

Hempsall Consultancies Ltd were commissioned to carry out an evaluation of children's centres in Barnet and produce a report which would address:

- What impact do children's centres in Barnet have on the journey of children and families in the short term and long term?
- To what extent do children's centres effectively offer value for money in terms of efficiently delivering services?
- How can Barnet children's centres best offer value for money services which achieve the greatest impact to children and families?

1.8 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2013:

As part of the Childcare Act 2006 it is the statutory duty of all English local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for local parents who need it, and to measure this sufficiency by conducting a comprehensive CSA every year.

1.9 Members of the TFG were then able to utilise this information in order to inform their own independent view on policy development in relation to Early Years Provision. The role of the TFG was to complement the on-going work already taking place in this area, and act as a non-Executive sounding board for the development of the Council's policy in this area.

1.10 This report seeks to set out the local and national context within which the scrutiny review took place and makes recommendations to the Cabinet on how the Council will meet its statutory and non-statutory duties in relation to early year's provision now and in the future. This report draws upon the extensive market research that was undertaken as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA), which was carried out by Coda Research Consultancy, the Hemsalls' Review of Children's Centres, and the data from the internal Early Years Review undertaken by the Children's Service.

2. Local Context:

2.1 There are an estimated 21,241 children under five in Barnet (0-4 years)¹. There has been an increase of 24% against the population figures calculated as part of the 2001 Census. Children under five account for 24.4% of Barnet's 19 and under population. The borough's population currently stands at 356,400 (as recorded in 2011 Census) and is projected to increase further, generating increasing demand for services.

2.1.2 Early years services in Barnet are typically of a good standard. The percentage of children achieving a good level of development in 2013 was 60%. This compares positively to the national average of 52%. Barnet also compares favourably when comparing percentages achieving a good level of development with Free School Meals (FSM) with 46% achieving good, compared to 36% nationally.

2.1.3 In 2011, the Barnet Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) found 12,600 childcare places for children under five available across the borough². The CSA also found that 71% of parents were satisfied with their current childcare arrangements. More nursery provision and

¹ ONS Subnational Population Projection (2008 Based, published May 2010)

² Barnet Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, 2011

more after school clubs were cited as improvements that could be made for out of school services for children 0 – 14 years of age.

- 2.1.4 Early years services are provided to those aged five and under, including those in school Reception classes. In Barnet, services are delivered in maintained nursery schools, schools, children's centres, and in private, voluntary and independent providers (PVI) venues including child-minders. As well as universal services such as education, health visitors and information for parents, targeted services are made available to those with additional support needs as well as teams delivering evidence-based intensive key working for families and commissioned delivery.

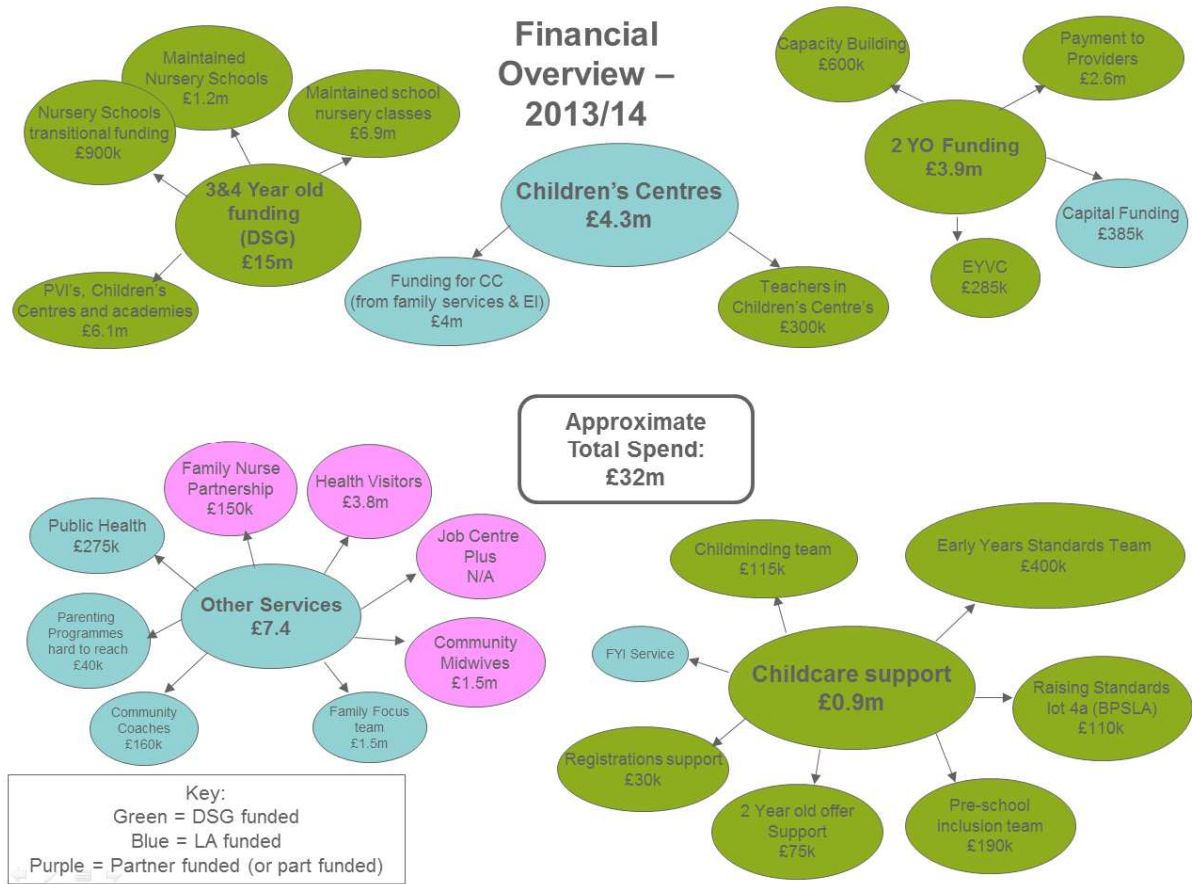
2.2 Financial Context:

- 2.2.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has the following savings linked to further reconfiguration of early years services:

- 2014/15 – £500k
- 2015/16 – £700k

- 2.2.2 The Priorities and Spending Review (PSR) will need to identify any further savings from 2016/17 onwards either in early years services and/ or created by improved early intervention in early years.

Figure One: The Approximate Spend for overall Early Years Provision and related support



2.3 National Context

2.3.1 Legislative Background:

Local Authorities have the following duties under the Childcare Act 2006:

Duty	Function
To secure sufficient childcare for working parents	Requirement on local authorities to ensure childcare is available to enable parents to take up work, education or training.
To secure prescribed early years provision free of charge	To ensure that all 3 & 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds can access high quality free nursery education.
Duty to provide access to childcare provision	To ensure local authorities undertake an assessment of childcare provision in their area (CSA).
Duty to provide information, advice and training to childcare providers	To ensure local authorities give childcare providers the necessary support to help deliver sustainable and affordable high quality childcare.

2.3.2 Free Entitlement For 2, 3 and 4 Year Olds:

Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on the Delivery of Free Early Education for Three and Four Year Olds and Securing Sufficient Childcare was published in September 2012³. It set out that Local Authorities are required by legislation to make sufficient free early education available (15 hours a week over 38 weeks) for every eligible child in their area from their 3rd birthday until they reach compulsory school age, making the Free Entitlement offer universal for all 3 and 4 year olds.

2.4 **Future Policy Landscape:**

- 2.4.1 Professor Cathy Nutbrown was commissioned by the Coalition Government to lead an independent review to consider how to strengthen qualifications and career pathways in the foundation years. Her final report was published in June 2012, entitled "*Foundations for Quality*"⁴. This review considered qualifications and training; both for young people who are new to the early education and childcare sector, and for those who are already in employment.
- 2.4.2 In January 2013, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare has published a report entitled, "*More Great Childcare*"⁵ which set out the Coalition Government's intention of achieving a dynamic childcare market, capable of delivering high quality early education. The report also noted and incorporated the Government's response to Professor Cathy Nutbrown's independent review, "*Foundations for Quality*".
- 2.4.3 The Coalition Government has set a policy direction that seeks to increase the supply of high quality, affordable childcare and early education, whilst encouraging providers to raise the quality of provision of early education and childcare for babies and young children. This will be underpinned by an inspection regime that responds with support and constructive challenge, and a clearer, simpler regulatory structure where more money reaches the frontline.
- 2.4.5 The proposals set out in the report, "*More Great Childcare*" intend to help providers to succeed by delivering more for the investment currently made by the Government and parents by:
- Raising the status and quality of the workforce;
 - Freeing high quality providers to offer more places;
 - Improving the regulatory regime; and
 - Giving more choice to parents.

3. **Review Format:**

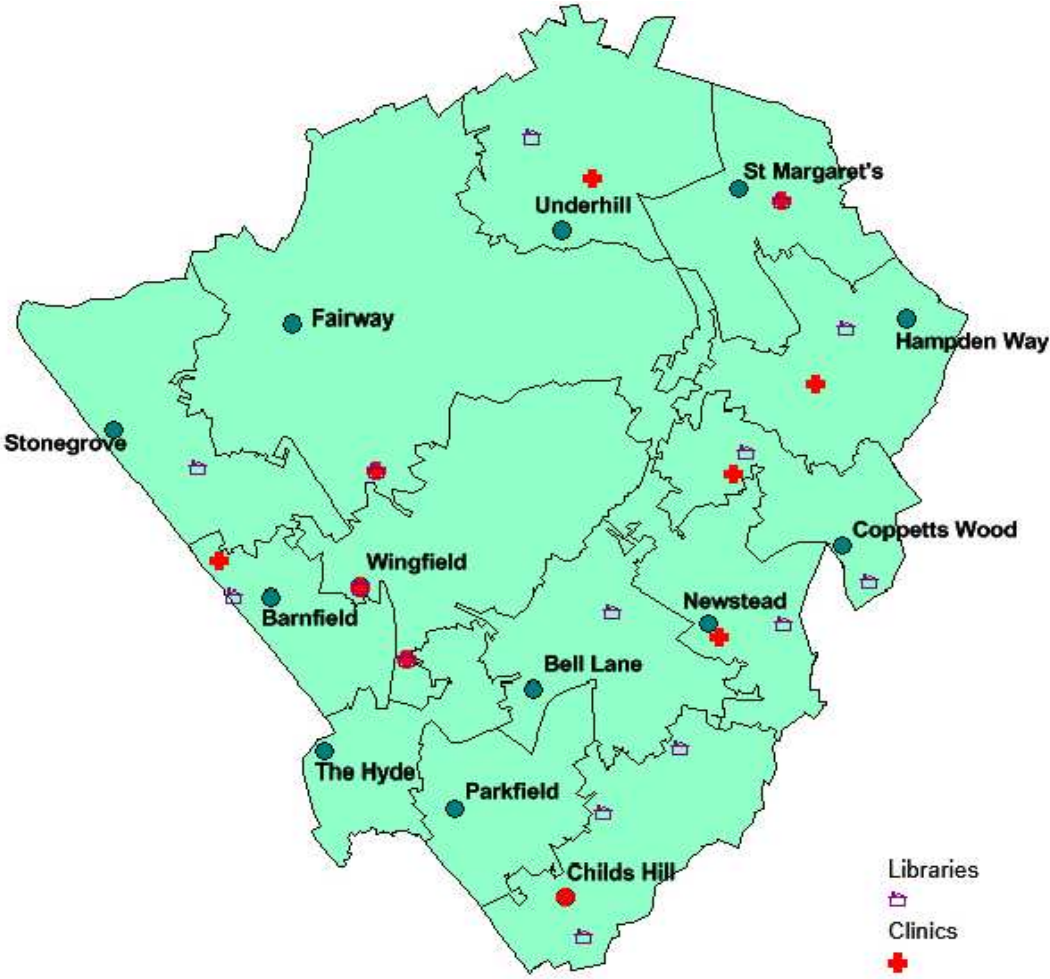
³ Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on the Delivery of Free Early Education for Three and Four Year Olds and Securing Sufficient Childcare, Department for Education, 2012

⁴ "Nutbrown Review: Foundations for Quality", Department for Education, 2012

⁵ More Great Childcare: Raising Quality and Giving Parents More Choice, Department for Education, January 2013

- 3.1 The Task and Finish Group met three times between May and October 2013 to consider evidence, and in addition to these meetings, conducted evidence gathering visits to the following sites: Fairway Children's Centre; West Hendon Pre-School; Underhill Children's Centre and Underhill Infant School; Brookhill Nursery School; Mill Hill Pre-school; Moss Hall Nursery School; and Turner Children's Centre in Brighton. At the first meeting on 22 May 2013, the Family & Community Well-being Lead Commissioner outlined a proposal to amend the scope and remit of the TFG. Officers proposed that the Group consider Early Years (ages 0-5) provision as a whole, rather than only Children's Centres.
- 3.2 Members noted changes in demographics would see the number of children aged 0–5 in the Borough grow alongside increasing financial pressures facing local government. As such, the TFG noted the requirement to review all Early Year's Provision in the Borough to ensure that it was sustainable in the future. The TFG noted the importance of looking at the most effective areas of early year's provision and how these were delivered, and expressed a particular interest in the consideration of Children's Centres, nurseries, nursery schools, child-minding and vulnerable children.
- 3.3 The Group next met on 27 June 2013 and agreed to focus on the following areas:
- Consider outcomes and the value for money of Barnet's Children's Centres;
 - Consider Children's Centres in the wider context of childcare provision; and
 - Link into the Children's Service internal Early Years Review, and provide challenge and analysis of the options under development.
- 3.4 The TFG noted that the purpose of Children's Centres was to help to enable the following:
- Child development and school readiness;
 - Child and family health and life chances;
 - Parenting aspirations and parenting skills.
- 3.5 The Group were provided with the Children's Centres "reach map" (Figure Two) and noted the importance of "knowing" the families within a given area. Members considered that without "reach areas", there would be the risk of families getting lost and slipping through the system, when intervention to improve outcomes could have been utilised. It is a key requirement of OFSTED for Children's Centres to "know" 65% of targeted families and 80% of all families within their reach area.
- 3.6 Officers advised the Group that very often, the most vulnerable families could be the hardest to reach, and noted the analysis contained in the Hempsalls report that showed the high proportion of Barnet residents using a Children's Centre from outside the reach area.
- 3.7 The Group discussed the option of grouping Children's Centres to keep the benefit of local delivery, whilst ensuring a more effective approach to reach areas and better value for money by sharing resources. Members were clear they wouldn't want to deter people away from services by restricting location or significantly increasing prices for sessions.

Figure Two: Children’s Centres Reach Map:



- 3.8 Members of the TFG noted that engaging with those most at risk was a proven way of providing better outcomes for children and families.
- 3.9 The Group expressed a view that children’s centres need to focus on delivering evidence based services and stressed the importance of identifying ways to strengthen joint working with health services.
- 3.10 Throughout the course of the review, the TFG undertook a series of evidence gathering visits to Children’s Centres, nursery schools (private and voluntary) and nursery school classes in schools.
- 3.11 Whilst visiting Fairway Children's Centre, Members met with staff who raised concerns that forthcoming changes to the benefits system may lead to a number of two year olds having their funding cut if currently unemployed parents returned to work. It was highlighted during the visits that staff who were considered to be well qualified could be low-paid, meaning that the providers had to rely on staff loyalty. Members noted that retaining and attracting staff was expected to be an on-going challenge for providers of early years provision.

3.12 A visit to Brookhill Nursery School revealed that despite an extension being completed in order to offer day care provision for 2 year olds, capacity was limited. The Group noted that extended hours had proved to be very popular at Moss Hall Nursery School, with 70 children attending for breakfast and evening clubs. However, Members noted there was no capacity to increase this offer even though there could be up to 50 more children ready to attend.

3.2 Brighton and Hove Site Visit: Local Authority with Innovative Links with Health, 17 September 2013:

3.2.1 The Early Years Task and Finish Group undertook a visit to Turner Children's Centre in Brighton, as an example of a local authority with a different model of delivery for Children's Centres. Brighton and Hove had been identified as an example of best practice by Ofsted, and was noted in a recent Local Government Association report as an example of collaborative working with health services to deliver a successful early intervention approach.

3.2.2 The Sure Start Children's Centre team at Turner is made up of health visitors, early year's visitors, a community nursery, nurse and speech therapists. Brighton and Hove Children's Centres are delivered via a health led model, with health visitors taking a management and leadership role within Children's Centres. Health visitors have been seconded into the Children's Centre by a Section 75 agreement, which is an agreement made under section 75 of National Health Services Act 2006 between a local authority and an NHS body in England. The use of this model has enabled Brighton and Hove to:

- Increase early identification and targeting of families; and
- Improve engagement with hard to reach families and a reduce the numbers of children going into other social care services such as Looked after Children or onto a child protection plan.

3.2.3 The TFG were presented with evidence throughout the visit that indicated that the health led model in Brighton had clear benefits. This model was allowing an increase in the early identification and targeting of families as evidenced in the significant reductions in the rate of children subject to a child protection plan. In Brighton and Hove, the rate of children subject a child protection plan per 10,000 children has fallen from 93.7 in 2010/11 to 55.9 in 2012/13. This is, however, still above the national average of 38 and statistical neighbour average of 44.5.

3.2.4 The model is also delivering in respect of the engagement of hard to reach families. It appeared that a significant factor in improving engagement is through the Section 75 agreement, which was used to second health visitors into the Children's Centres. A significant benefit of this is that the Section 75 provides for a "data share" of the entire 0–5 years population. This in turn means that Brighton and Hove "know" virtually all of their early year's population.

3.2.5 There is strong evidence in support of the integrated health model for Children's Centres. The Parliamentary Education Select Committee conducted a review into Sure Start Children's Centres, and considered evidence from a range of Children's Centres from across the country in relation to health integration, including the Brighton and Hove Model. In relation to the Brighton and Hove Model, the Education Select Committee received written evidence as part of their investigation which noted that:

"This is an example of full integration of health and children's centres across a local authority. In Brighton and Hove, Children's Centres are managed as a city-wide service, led by three Neighbourhood Sure Start

Service Managers, two with health visitor backgrounds and one from social work. The entire health visiting service for the city has been seconded into the Council through a Section 75 agreement and work as an integral part of the Children's Centre service.

The integrated children's centre teams are led by health visitors who supervise out-reach workers. In addition there are specialist city wide teams offering specific support, for example breastfeeding coordinators to encourage initiation and sustain breastfeeding in areas of the city where this is low. Traveller and asylum seeker families are supported by a specialist health visitor and early years' visitor post. Teenage parents are supported by named health visitors at each Children's Centre and early years' visitors.

Outcomes:

This model has delivered value for money, transparent and effective use of resources, and safe evidenced-based health care delivery. The impact is demonstrated through improvements in breastfeeding rates, obesity rates in reception and a sharp rise in the percentage of children living in the most disadvantaged areas who achieve a good Early Years Foundation Stage Profile score – from 33% in 2008 to 55% in 2011. Key development include focussing support on the most disadvantaged families and increasing the use of evidence based programmes including Family Nurse Partnership which will start in the autumn. The most recent Children's Centre to be inspected by Ofsted was judged to be outstanding in every area and it noted that the health-led model plays a fundamental part in streamlining services and integrating provision. Ante-natal and post-natal services are delivered directly from the centre. As a result, the centre reaches 100% of children aged under five years living in the area. Highly effective intervention by the centre's health partners has made an impressive impact on children's welfare and family well-being."

Source:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmeduc/writev/852/m22a.htm>

Market Research Analysis:

- 3.3.1 In October 2013, the Group received a presentation from Officers in the Children's Service who provided an update on the status of the first phase of the internal review into early year's provision.
- 3.3.2 The TFG were advised that Coda had been commissioned to carry out the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) and that the key objectives of the CSA were to determine:
- How effective is provision in meeting outcomes?;
 - What are the changing needs of the Borough?; and
 - What is the supply and demand of childcare in the Borough?
- 3.3.3 The purpose of the CSA was to outline the sufficiency of Barnet's childcare market, the needs of parents and families and the ability of our childcare market to respond to these requirements.

3.3.4 The following enquiries were undertaken as market research to formulate the evidence base for the CSA 2013:

- 1,100 telephone interviews were undertaken and completed with local parents;
- 60 responses were collected via an on-line survey;
- Over 400 telephone interviews with daycare providers and childminders were conducted;
- Focus groups with were conducted with: parents from specific backgrounds, daycare providers and childminders, children and young people
- Analysis of Barnet-wide demographics and population projections was undertaken; and
- Analysis of Barnet-wide *known* supply of formal childcare was undertaken.

3.3.5 The following recommendations had arisen from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2013:

Recommendation	
1)	<p>Increase Parental Awareness:</p> <p>A new marketing campaign should be considered to raise the profile of the availability of the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEE) for two year olds, particularly to those parents and communities who would qualify to access this form of support.</p>
2)	<p>Increase provider awareness of FEE:</p> <p>The CSA shows a slight decrease in take up of the FEE three and four year old offer. Actions to re-promote this offer across the borough especially in areas that the CSA has highlighted the awareness is lower including the FEE for two year olds offer.</p>
3)	<p>Increase the Timings and Flexibility of Childcare Provision:</p> <p>This is needed particularly for those parents whose career/employment choices necessitate working outside a standard 9am – 5pm working day to meet the needs of parents.</p>
4)	<p>Respond to Emerging Geographical Gaps:</p> <p>Taking into consideration the population projections and the regeneration schemes, the South and West planning areas have both current and projected gaps in childcare. The Council needs to also consider parental preferences when responding to geographical gaps in childcare provision.</p>
5)	<p>Respond to insufficient provision for parents of children with additional needs in the West of the borough and increase information available to disability groups</p> <p>Approximately 64% of childcare providers are able to provide childcare for children with additional needs/special needs/disabilities across the borough however providers state the awareness of specialist provision for parents who have children with disabilities is limited.</p>
6)	<p>Review FYi:</p>

	The roles and responsibilities of the Council's FYi (for your information) service are not widely known or understood by providers or parents. The Service needs to be reviewed and re-aligned to meet the changing needs of parents.
7)	<p>Address Specific Cultural Needs whilst Considering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)</p> <p>Cultural needs have been cited as a barrier to our black minority and ethnic (BME) groups accessing childcare. The focus groups saw repeated requests by non-English speaking parents that <i>ideally</i> the childcare that they access would be provided by – or to an extent staffed by – child carers who speak their first language and who are aware of their culture and cultural needs.</p>
8)	<p>Re-brand Childminders:</p> <p>Parents do not favour child minders over group settings and the Council needs to support the re-branding of child minders as a viable childcare option.</p>

3.3.6 Members were advised that evidence from the CSA pointed to a projected population increase in 90% of the Borough's wards by 2018 with the highest percentage increase of 0 – 4 year olds which will occur in the following three wards – in order of frequency:

- **Colindale** (West Planning Area)
- **West Hendon** (South Planning Area)
- **Golders Green** (South Planning Area)

3.3.7 Councillor Kate Salinger questioned the validity of this data, and requested that it be recorded that she did not accept the data that provided the statistic of projected population increase in 90% of the Borough's Wards. Councillor Coakley Webb also questioned the evidence base for the projection that there would be a 10% drop in the East Planning Area.

3.3.8 Members of the TFG requested to be provided with further information behind the reasoning of this projection. The Group were provided with the following information by the Officers who had commissioned the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment following the meeting:

“Earlier this year the GLA released the first population projections based on the 2011 Census. These projections will become the standard set of population projections used across the Council. They use the Census 2011 counts as a baseline and model using births, deaths, migration and housing development plans provided by the Council. These projections include total population counts to 2041, single year of age projections, age group projections, ward projections and ethnic group projections.

The decrease in the East Planning area, as outlined in the Early Years Review Phase One document, detailed a decrease of 2.6% by 2018 and a further 8.5% by 2023 for ages 0-4. This decrease is based on using the criteria detailed above. Also, whilst the 0-4 population is decreasing, the population as a whole is increasing across the East Planning Area apart from Coppetts (across the same timescales).

Although no population projections can be 100 per cent accurate, these are our standard figures used by the Council.”

- 3.3.9 Following this explanation, Councillor Kate Salinger advised that she was unconvinced of the accuracy of this particular projection.
- 3.3.10 The TFG were advised of the statutory requirements to Free Early Education Entitlement (FEE) Members were advised that the Council has a statutory duty to provide FEE to all 3 & 4 years' olds for 15 hours per week and a statutory duty to provide FEE to eligible 2 year olds.
- 3.3.11 Members were advised that research from the CSA showed the following in relation to Free Early Education for 3 & 4 Year Olds:
- 95% of day nurseries and 96% of pre-school/playgroups stated that they were able to provide FEE places for three and four year olds.
 - 13% of registered childminders stated that they were able to provide FEE places for three and four year olds
 - The West of the borough had the highest percentage of FEE places.
- 3.3.12 Members noted that research from the CSA in showed the following in relation to 2 year olds:
- 51% of day nurseries and 67% of pre-school/playgroups stated that they were able to provide FEE places for two year olds.
 - The FEE2 criteria is currently based on the same criteria for free school meals but this will change again in September 2014 to widen to the 40% most deprived 2 year olds.
- 3.3.13 Officers advised that daycare providers and childminders had stated that they expect to continue in operation for over 5 years, with the number of daycare providers expected to continue operating for over 5 years being 18.5% higher than the number of registered childminders. Reviewing these statistics, Members highlighted the need to address the capacity issue in relation to the 2 Year Old Offer.
- 3.3.14 The TFG noted that 46% of parents surveyed (out of 850) had stated that they accessed either formal or informal childcare in order to enable them to work, and that this response was most prevalent in the East of the Borough. The TFG were also advised that out of the 850 parents surveyed, 12% stated that they were either quite unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, and that the main reason for parents being unsatisfied was childcare being too expensive (56%) or that times were inconvenient/not flexible (21%)
- 3.3.15 Members were presented with information which highlighted the strength of the relationships between childcare support providers across a number of different teams, including Children's Centres, GPs, Social Workers, Family Focus Teams, and Community Midwives. Members commented on the lack of joined-up services, and compared this to the joined-up system in Brighton and Hove. Members considered that Barnet needed better links between the different agencies and teams in order to achieve the benefits that had been realised by the integrated Health services at Brighton and Hove.
- 3.3.16 Officers provided an outline of the "Hub and Spoke" model that could allow for Children's Centres to function more flexibly, remove barriers to targeting vulnerable families (ie reach areas) whilst allowing a localised approach to need. The Group noted that this model

would place Children's Centres in groups to specialise in certain areas, and that it had been recommended both in the Hemsalls report and by Ofsted.

3.3.17 The TFG commented that the "Hub and Spoke" Model seemed a sensible approach and supported the development of this option in more detail in Phase Two of the internal Early Years Review.

3.4 Internal Early Years Review: Phase One Analysis by Task and Finish Group

3.4.1 As part of the Task and Finish Group review, the Group undertook to provide an analysis of the internal Early Years Review (Phase One) and to provide feedback on the evidence based- recommendations that were emerging from this review.

3.4.2 The following overarching recommendations came out of the internal Phase One Early Years Review:

- 1) Ensure there is sufficient childcare in Barnet
- 2) A further shift in the balance from universal to targeted services
- 3) A joined-up Barnet early years system

3.4.3 Members provided their comments on these over-arching themes, as set out below:

1) Ensure There is Sufficient Childcare in Barnet

Officers informed the TFG that a bid was being made for capital funding to ensure sufficient childcare in growth areas of the Borough where there was not currently sufficient childcare. Officers then re-iterated the Council's statutory duty around childcare and the importance of quality childcare for children's development and supporting families to work. In principle, Members expressed support for capital funding for childcare provision where necessary. The TFG highlighted that it was very important that, like school places, appropriate and sufficient childcare was considered when planning permission was given for regeneration schemes. A more detailed long-term plan to meet childcare sufficiently will be developed alongside Phase 2 of the internal Early Years Review. This will include further information on capital funding.

The TFG requested that the first recommendation within the Internal Early Years Report be amended to read as follows:

- 1) Ensure There is Sufficient and Appropriate Childcare in Barnet

2) A Further Shift in the Balance from Universal to Targeted Services:

3.4.4 A Member of the Group expressed concern that in order to shift the balance from universal to targeted services, there would be less of a focus on services aimed at the wider population. The Group were informed that if there was to be a shift from universal to targeted services, then there would be fewer resources available for universal services. It was highlighted that evidence suggested that there was a much higher return when targeting disadvantaged groups.

Councillor Coakley Webb informed officers that she would not be able to endorse such recommendations without being clear what the exact implications of this recommendation included.

3) A Joined-Up Barnet Early Years System:

- 3.4.5 The Group considered the “Hub and Spoke” model of delivery for Children’s Centres, noting that this model allowed for greater reach across centres and for the joining up of links across the area. Members were also informed that this model would allow Children’s Centres in groups to specialise in certain areas. Officers advised that the “Hub and Spoke” model was recommended both in the Hempsalls report and by Ofsted.
- 3.4.6 Officers also recommended exploring the integration of health services, in particular, the integration of Health visitors into the Children’s Centres structure. Phase Two of the Early Years review, alongside the Health Visitor and School Nurse Review will explore this. Based on their evidence gathering visit to an example of a Children’s Centre with integrated Health visitors, Members expressed support for this idea.
- 3.4.7 The TFG noted that this was the model that Brighton and Hove City Council used and supported the development of this option in more detail in Phase 2 of the internal review.

4. Key Findings and Recommendations of the Early Years Review Task and Finish Group:

- 4.1 Throughout the course of the review the TFG sought to develop evidence-based recommendations that would focus on supporting the delivery of sustainable, high-quality early years provision within the London Borough of Barnet. The TFG made the following Recommendations to Cabinet:

4.1.1 Recommendation One: “To focus on early years provision development in areas where demographic changes mean there are gaps in childcare provision. This is an issue in both the South and West of the borough, especially Colindale, Golders Green and West Hendon.”

- 4.1.2. The Task and Finish Group made clear the importance of meeting the childcare provision requirements of families, as has been enshrined within legislation via the Childcare Act 2006. The Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for working families and secure prescribed early years provision free of charge for all 3 and 4 year olds and a proportion of 2 year olds for 15 hours a week.

- 4.1.3 Whilst Members questioned how accurate the population projections could be, the Group were clear that the Borough must be able to meet the capacity needs to an increasing early years population, and were acutely aware of the statutory requirements upon the Council to meet such requirements.

Figure Three: Pre-school children in Barnet demographics, taken the 2013 CSA data, based upon the 2011 Census.

This table shows that significant growth in the population of 0-4 year olds is expected in the next ten years.

Ward	Population 0 – 4 years 2013	Population 0 – 4 years 2018	% change at 2018	Population 0 – 4 years 2023	% change at 2023
East Planning Area					
Brunswick Park	989	951	-3.8%	867	-8.8%
East Barnet	1,180	1,132	-4.1%	1,027	-9.2%
Woodhouse	1,183	1,177	-0.1%	1,090	-7.4%
Coppetts	1,144	1,098	-4.0%	994	-9.5%
East Finchley	1,069	1,062	-0.1%	979	-7.8%
East	5,565	5,420	-2.6%	4,957	-8.5%
South Planning Area					
Garden Suburb	1,150	1,126	-2.1%	1,023	-9.1%
Childs Hill	1,432	1,396	-2.5%	1,303	-6.7%
Golders Green	1,681	2,419	+30.5%	2,856	+15.3%
Hendon	1,422	1,387	-2.5%	1,268	-8.5%
West Hendon	1,363	1,458	+6.5%	1,546	+5.6%
Finchley Church End	1,035	1,026	-0.1%	946	-7.7%
South	8,083	8,812	+8.2%	8,942	+1.5%
Central Planning Area					
High Barnet	930	910	-2.1%	825	-9.3%
Underhill	1,019	1,039	+1.9%	972	-6.4%
Oakleigh	1,008	972	-3.5%	873	-10%
Totteridge	1,127	1,193	+5.5%	1,147	-3.8%
West Finchley	1,090	1,064	-2.3%	981	-7.8%
Central	5,174	5,178	+0.1%	4,798	-7.3%
West Planning Area					
Burnt Oak	1,482	1,505	+1.5%	1,413	-6.1%
Colindale	1,837	2,918	+37%	3,456	+15.5%
Edgware	1,335	1,280	-4.1%	1,168	-8.7%
Hale	1,347	1,245	-7.5%	1,151	-7.5%
Mill Hill	1,251	1,279	+2.2%	1,333	+4.0%
West	7,252	8,227	+11.9%	8,521	+3.4%
Barnet	26,074	27,637	+5.6%	27,218	-1.5%

4.1.4 Overall, the CSA 2013 indicates that in order to match the estimated percentage increase in the number of 0 - 4 year olds who will be a resident in Barnet by 2018, a corresponding increase of 559 (registered) early years childcare places would be required, in order to match the existing status quo.

4.1.5 Based on these figures, Colindale Ward is expected to see the highest projected increase of 0 – 19 year olds between the years 2013 – 2018. However, at the moment, this ward

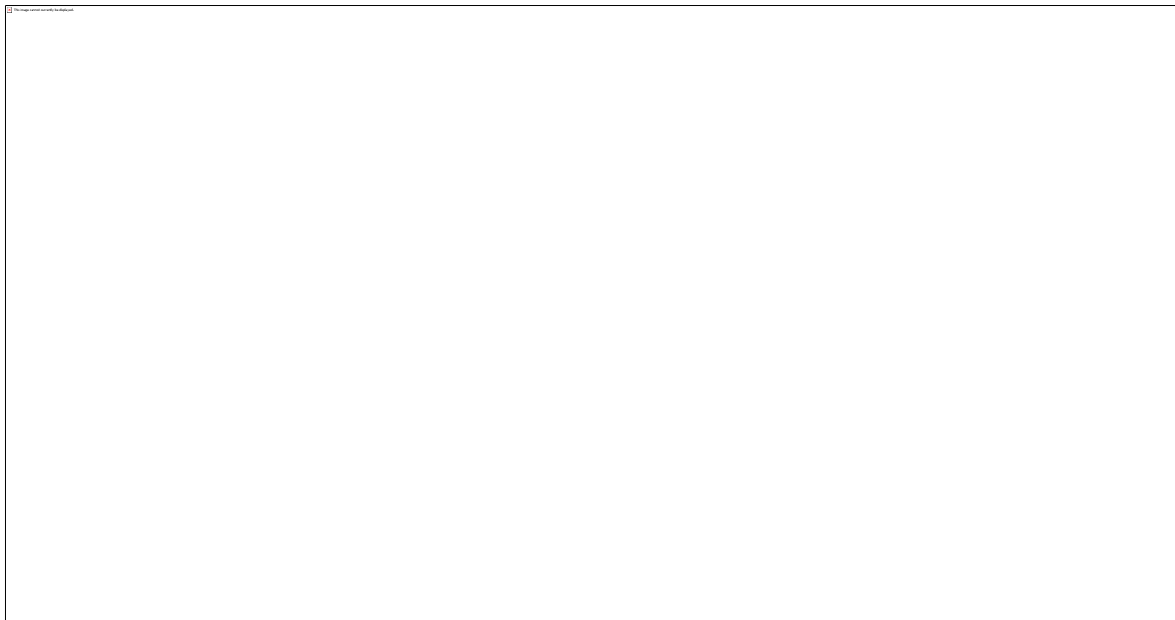
accounts for a relatively low amount of early year's childcare and out of school childcare places available within the West planning area.

4.1.6 The CSA 2013 projected that the Golders Green ward would see the third highest projected increase of 0 – 19 year olds between the years 2013 – 2018, yet at present, the Golders Green locality accounts for a relatively low amount of early year's childcare places.

4.1.7 The CSA has recommended that the Council needs to respond to emerging geographical gaps, especially in the South and West planning areas which both have current and projected gaps in childcare. Golders Green will see a population increase of 31% in 0-4 year olds by 2018 and a further 15% by 2023, with Colindale also seeing a 37% increase by 2018 and a further 15% by 2013. This is an increase by 2013 of 1,175 in Golders Green and 1619. This is demonstrated in Figure Five, overleaf.

Figure Four:

4.1.8 The below graph was produced from data from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2013, and shows the projected population increase of 0-19 year olds 2013 - 2018 by Ward.



4.1.9 The CSA also recommends that alongside increasing sufficiency the Council should increase provider and parent awareness of the Free Early Education offer and increase flexibility of childcare provision. The Task and Finish Group agreed with this statement, and noted that the Council should consider ways of increasing awareness of the Free Early Education entitlement offers.

4.1.10 Through their investigation, the Group considered the on-going Regeneration Programme, under which 23,500 new homes are due to be built in Barnet, within the following developments: Dollis Valley; West Hendon; Granville Road; Brent Cross/Cricklewood; Stonegrove/Spur Road; Colindale; Grahame Park; and Mill Hill East. The TFG noted the implications that the regeneration schemes would have on early years provision and sought assurance that provision had been planned into schemes.

Figure Five: Summary of Assessment of Sufficiency at August 2013

Ward	% of Barnet's 0-4 year olds living in ward	% of Barnet's known supply of early years places for 0-4 year olds in the ward in 2013	Assessed Sufficiency Yes/No for early years childcare	% of Barnet's 5-19 year olds living in ward	% of Barnet's known supply of out of school childcare places for 5-19 year olds in the ward in 2013	Assessed Sufficiency Yes/No for out of school childcare	% of Barnet's 0-19 year olds living in ward	% of Barnet's known supply of childminder places for 0-19 year olds in the ward in 2013	Assessed Sufficiency Yes/No for childminder places
East Planning Area									
Brunswick Park	3.79%	3.21%	No	4.38%	3.29%	No	4.50%	5.40%	Yes
East Barnet	4.53%	4.24%	No	3.94%	8.68%	Yes	4.40%	7.70%	Yes
Woodhouse	4.53%	3.90%	No	3.86%	1.67%	No	4.46%	4.71%	Yes
Coppetts	4.39%	4.86%	Yes	3.56%	4.35%	Yes	4.49%	7.38%	Yes
East Finchley	4.09%	3.47%	No	3.21%	3.55%	Yes	4.07%	4.97%	Yes
South Planning Area									
Garden Suburb	4.41%	4.94%	Yes	4.48%	14.15%	Yes	4.25%	0.48%	No
Childs Hill	5.49%	4.71%	No	5.53%	0.84%	No	5.26%	1.44%	No
Golders Green	6.44%	4.66%	No	7.94%	1.48%	No	6.64%	3.69%	No
Hendon	5.45%	7.64%	Yes	4.61%	3.59%	No	5.06%	6.63%	Yes
West Hendon	5.23%	6.08%	Yes	4.95%	1.27%	No	4.67%	4.49%	No
Finchley Church End	3.97%	4.37%	Yes	3.95%	10.48%	Yes	3.92%	5.08%	Yes
Central Planning Area									
High Barnet	3.60%	3.84%	Yes	2.98%	6.65%	Yes	3.79%	5.78%	Yes
Underhill	3.91%	4.12%	Yes	5.06%	2.15%	No	4.38%	5.82%	Yes
Oakleigh	3.86%	2.20%	No	3.68%	2.03%	No	4.05%	6.05%	Yes
Totteridge	4.32%	5.91%	Yes	4.44%	6.55%	Yes	3.99%	2.41%	No
West Finchley	4.18%	4.58%	Yes	3.40%	3.04%	No	3.87%	3.26%	No
West Planning Area									
Burnt Oak	5.68%	6.34%	Yes	6.12%	5.91%	No	5.95%	4.17%	No
Colindale	7.05%	2.98%	No	7.68%	3.25%	No	5.82%	2.94%	No
Edgware	5.12%	5.58%	Yes	4.95%	6.64%	Yes	5.45%	4.17%	No
Hale	5.16%	4.47%	No	5.32%	1.98%	No	5.28%	8.29%	Yes
Mill Hill	4.80%	7.90%	Yes	5.96%	8.45%	Yes	5.70%	5.14%	No

4.2 Recommendation Two: “To re-focus resources to improve early years support in the most deprived areas of the Borough and for the most vulnerable families in the Borough.”

- 4.2.1 Barnet is a relatively affluent Borough. However, it does have pockets of deprivation. According to the 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Burnt Oak and Colindale remain the most deprived wards in Barnet by a significant margin.
- 4.2.2 Recent evidence has identified that if families’ needs are met early, then it will improve outcomes for them and reduce the number of costly financial interventions required to be made by the state at a later date.
- 4.2.3 Both the Coalition Government and Opposition are in agreement that early intervention is an effective method when it comes to supporting children and families⁷. Practitioners understand that families tend to have better outcomes when early intervention approaches are adopted ⁸
- 4.2.4 Vulnerable children aged two to five are offered funded childcare places as part of the Early Years Vulnerable Children (EYVC) funding which offers eligible families up to 15 hours of childcare in Children’s Centres which provide on-site childcare.
- 4.2.5 The Group noted that the statutory duties for the Council in relation to Children’s Centres include the targeting of children and families at risk of poor outcomes. The Group also acknowledged that Early Intervention could have the biggest effect in terms of outcomes when targeted at those most deprived. Evidence shows that targeted support on the most disadvantaged has more impact than support offered to less disadvantaged. Indeed, a recent report produced by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) entitled *Early Developments – Bridging the gap between evidence and policy*⁹ has stressed that the positive impact of high-quality childcare is more pronounced for those children who are at risk of starting school ‘behind’ their peers: those with less-educated parents, from lower income, or for whom English is a second language.
- 4.2.6 The Group noted that more targeted support would mean less of a universal offer, and that a careful balance would have to be made between the two.

4.3 Recommendation Three: “To recommend the integration of Health professionals into Children’s Centres”

- 4.3.1 Brighton and Hove Children’s Centres are delivered through a health led model, with Health visitors taking a management and leadership role within Children’s Centres. By developing this model Brighton and Hove have told increased early identification and targeting of families, improved engagement with hard to reach families and a reduced the numbers of children going into other social care services such as Looked after Children or onto a Child Protection Plan.
- 4.3.2 At Brighton and Hove, Health visitors are seconded into the Council and funded from health budgets under a section 75 provider agreement. This allows for a data share, meaning that virtually all children are “known” to the local authority, once again, assisting early identification of vulnerable families. All data can therefore legally be shared with the Council. The service’s vision is to reduce inequalities and give children the best start in life.

⁸ Easton, C. and Gee, G. (2012). Early intervention: informing local practice (LGA Research Report). Slough: NFER.

- 4.3.3 Following inspections, Ofsted have noted that Brighton and Hove's Children's Centres have "exceptional partnership working with a wide range of providers, such as midwives, adult education professionals, community organisations and social care teams, is making a significant contribution to the services available to users, resulting in improved outcomes"
- 4.3.4 Following the visit to Brighton and Hove, the TFG highlighted the benefits of the integration of health services in Children's Centres and, noted that this was a key part of a more joined up approach for early year's services.
- 4.3.5 The Task and Finish Group were clear in their support for the well delivered and integrated health system that was being delivered by Brighton and Hove, and support the development of such a model at the London Borough of Barnet.

4.4 Recommendation Four: "To develop a sustainable funding solution for nursery schools and that the Schools Forum be informed of the view of this Task and Finish Group."

- 4.4.1 The Group noted the savings linked to further reconfiguration of early year's services as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and highlighted the need for a sustainable funding solution to nursery schools.
- 4.4.2 Barnet has four maintained nursery schools: Hampden Way, Moss Hall, St Margaret's and Brookhill, which have traditionally been funded by the local authority through the maintained school funding formula.
- 4.4.3 The Early Years Single Funding Formula (EFSFF) was developed in 2011 following a full consultation with representatives from nursery schools, schools, children's centres, childminders and private early years providers from across the borough. The result was a single transparent formula with the same funding rates for all childcare providers including nursery schools.
- 4.4.5 Nursery schools moved from their old funding arrangements to the new formula in April 2012, but with additional support from the old funding formula, and in particular the minimum funding guarantee (MFG). From April 2013, reform of school funding meant that it was no longer possible to apply the mainstream school MFG to nursery schools, so in October 2012, Barnet's Schools Forum agreed to fund the nursery schools at an extra cost of about £800,000 for a transition period during 2013-14 to provide the equivalent of the MFG. They have now agreed to extend this to 2014/15 to give time for discussions on longer term solutions. A copy of this Task and Finish Group report will be made available to the Barnet Schools Forum.

5. Thanks and Acknowledgements

5.1 The Task and Finish Group would like to put on record their thanks to the following organisations who have made this investigation possible:

- Fairway Children's Centre and Fairway School's nursery
- West Hendon Pre-School
- Underhill Children's Centre and Underhill Infant School's nursery
- Brookhill Nursery School
- Mill Hill Pre-school
- Moss Hall Nursery School
- Tarner Children's Centre, Brighton and Hove

5.2 The Task and Finish Group would also like to thank Officers from the Children's Service at the London Borough of Barnet for their assistance in completing this piece of work.