

London Borough of Barnet Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy

August 2014



Barnet Safeguarding Children Board

Barnet Children's Trust Board

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Early Intervention and Prevention is about tackling problems experienced by children and families as early as possible to improve outcomes, and to lower costs.
- The purpose of this strategy (which sits alongside a number of other strategies) is to provide a framework to organise our early help services, to monitor their success, and to drive improvement. The strategy was commissioned by the Children's Trust Board and has been formulated through consultation with staff and partners.
- The approach proposed is that early help services should be organised according to three guiding principles: **i) Intervene as early as possible; ii) Take a whole family approach; and iii) use evidence based monitoring systems.**
- The strategy defines four broad levels of need that children and families can fit into, ranging from level 1 (low level need- suitable for universal services), up to Level 4 – acute needs (requiring social care intervention). The overall intention of the strategy is to **treat problems at the earliest level of need possible; and to seek to shift families down the tiers of need through successful interventions.**
- In order to organise our Early Help services around the specific issues facing Barnet families, we have conducted a needs analysis using local data. This analysis identifies 8 'themes' or problems which are most likely to drive poor outcomes for Barnet families: **Domestic violence; alcohol and/or drug misuse; mental health; parenting and neglect; unemployment; involvement with police; missing from school; and child sexual exploitation.** We found that the 'toxic trio' of DV, alcohol/drugs and mental health were the most prevalent causes of poor outcomes.
- The Barnet Early Help Offer- i.e. the set of services which delivers our early intervention strategy- is formed of the following key parts: **1) A Front door/triaging service-** which assesses and signposts cases to early help services; **2) A core set of council early help services:** including Children's Centres; the Intensive Family Focus Team and Youth Services; and **3) a set of commissioned services**, where the council procures early help services from third parties – for example Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services; **4) Services provided by partners:** such as services provided by the voluntary sector which are not commissioned by the Council. We will review the above offer to ensure it is line with the 8 themes identified in our needs analysis.
- We will measure the success of the Early Intervention Strategy through two key indicators: increasing our number of high quality early help (CAF) assessments, and increasing the percentage of these plans which are successfully delivered (see overleaf).

In terms of Governance, the Early Intervention and Prevention strategy will be overseen by the Children's Trust Board and the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board, with updates to other Boards as appropriate (Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership).

Our strategy boils down to driving up the number of high quality early help assessments (CAFs), and ensuring that the highest possible percentage of these assessments are successful. If we do this, we will be delivering on the three key principles underpinning our strategy:

Key deliverable	Link to key principles	How will doing this deliver the strategy?
Increase number of CAFs	Intervene as early as possible	We will be intervening as early as possible CAF assessment is early intervention in action
	Take a whole family approach	We will be taking a whole family, multi-agency approach because this is built into the CAF process
Increase per centage of successful assessments	Use evidence based monitoring systems	We will be using targeted interventions based on evidence of the needs of families in Barnet
		We will be using interventions based on effective monitoring of what delivers positive outcomes

We are working with partners to develop meaningful targets for the levels of increases we aim to achieve against these two key indicators.

2. DEFINITIONS, RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

What is Early Intervention and Prevention?

Early Intervention and Prevention is about:

- identifying the needs of children, young people and their families at an early stage;
- providing timely and targeted support to prevent the difficulties that they can experience from arising or escalating.¹

We know that effective Early Intervention and Prevention can:

- improve outcomes for children and families; and
- significantly reduce costly support at a later stage

What is the Early Help Offer?

The 'Early Help Offer' is the set of services which deliver an Early Intervention and Prevention approach.

Why do we need an Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy in Barnet?

This strategy provides a framework for the Council and partners to ensure that early help services are:

- effectively co-ordinated and targeted across the Partnership;
- success monitored;
- Subject to the process of continuous improvement

In addition *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (March 2013) sets out requirements for local authorities to ensure a framework is in place to:

- identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- provide targeted early help services to improve the outcomes of a child

The Ofsted Single Inspection Framework assesses the overall effectiveness of services and arrangements for children, including early help.

How can we work effectively with our partners?

Within the Council we have mapped our Early Intervention and Prevention provision; identified the key drivers of cost and poor outcomes, and proposed a set of principles for 'good Early Intervention and Prevention'.

¹ 'Prevention' is the work of building capacity such that problems do not arise in the first place, whereas 'Early Intervention' involves responding to a problem before it escalates.

Through the Children's Trust Board we have asked our partners to:

- Commit to creating a shared plan for Early Intervention and Prevention
- As a first step, partners to provide staff resource to map out the Early Intervention and Prevention provision within their agency, and the key dependencies between services.

We are working with Health, Education, the Police, and the Voluntary and Community Sector to agree their contributions to this strategy.

Connection with Central Government – Troubled Families programme

Barnet has been selected as an early starter for phase II of the national programme. We will be seeking to underpin the early intervention strategy with the Troubled Families approach.

The strategic context

Nationally, there is growing consensus about the value and importance of early intervention. Graham Allen's reports have argued that Early Intervention and Prevention can break the intergenerational cycles of dysfunction, and has the potential to significantly reduce later costs to the taxpayer as well as non-financial costs to society as a whole². The NAO report on Early Action argues that a concerted shift away from reactive spending towards early action can result in better outcomes and greater value for money³. These views are echoed by the Troubled Families Programme and the Early Intervention Foundation⁴

Barnet's own empirical research on cost avoidance supports the national literature. Our study of 109 family support cases suggests that early intervention in these cases saved the public sector approximately £1.1m⁵

The local context

In the local context, this early intervention strategy sits alongside a broader set of strategy documents, as set out in the diagram below.

² "Early Intervention – the next steps" in January 2011 Graham Allen
Early Intervention: Smart Investments, Massive Savings' was published in July 2011

³ <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Early-Action-full-report.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.earlyinterventionfoundation.org.uk/>

⁵ *Assessing the cost savings of Early Intervention on Troubled Families*. This short paper is referenced in the Evidence Base document.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Barnet Children's Trust Board

Barnet Safeguarding Children Board

Safer Communities Partnership Board

Children and Young People's Plan

DV

Neglect

CSE

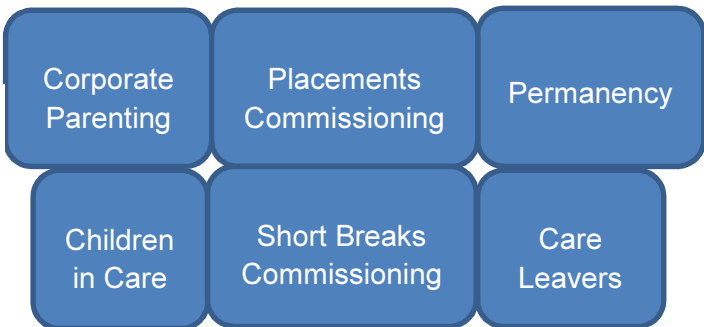
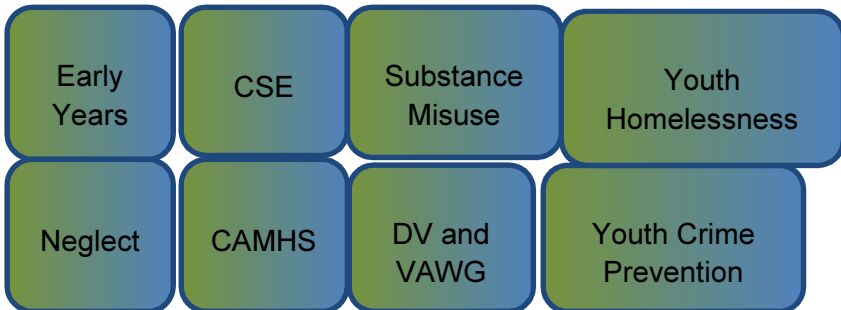
E-Safety

Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy

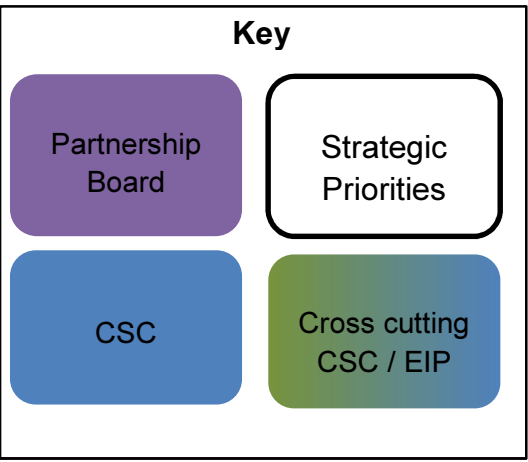
Meeting Needs of Families Early Before they Escalate

Children's Social Care Strategy

Keeping Children and Young People Safe and achieving the best outcomes for them



2 tiers here does not indicate subsidiarity



Children and Young People's Plan:

Barnet's Children and Young People's Plan 2013 to 2016 explains what the organisations represented on Barnet's Children's Trust Board will do to support children, young people and their families to lead happy and successful lives. One of the plan's cross-cutting priorities is Early Intervention and Prevention.

Barnet Safeguarding Children Board's priorities:

Neglect, Domestic violence, E-safety and Child sexual exploitation

Domestic Violence (DV) and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy:

One of the four objectives of the borough's recently refreshed DV and VAWG Strategy 2013-2016 is

Prevention: changing attitudes and preventing violence, awareness raising campaigns, safeguarding and educating children and young people, early identification and training.

Youth Crime Prevention Strategy:

Sets the partnership approach responding to serious youth violence and gangs in Barnet.

Early Years Review:

Focusing on bringing Barnet's Children's Centres together into a centrally managed locality structure to make more efficient and effective use of our resources and integrating health visiting to make better use of the service's universal reach and ability to identify the most vulnerable families.

CAMHS Review-

A review of Barnet's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services is being carried out to inform the re-commissioning of the service, ensuring that it is best meeting the needs of Barnet's children, young people and families.

3. OUR PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH TO EARLY INTERVENTION

We have developed three principles that underpin our approach (for evidence base behind these see *Early Intervention and Prevention: Evidence Base and Services Analysis*). The principles are:

1. **Intervene as early as possible** – in the life of a child and the life of a problem
2. **Take a whole family approach:**
 - By considering and potentially intervening across the family unit (rather than just a child or a parent)
 - Different agencies working seamlessly together with a family

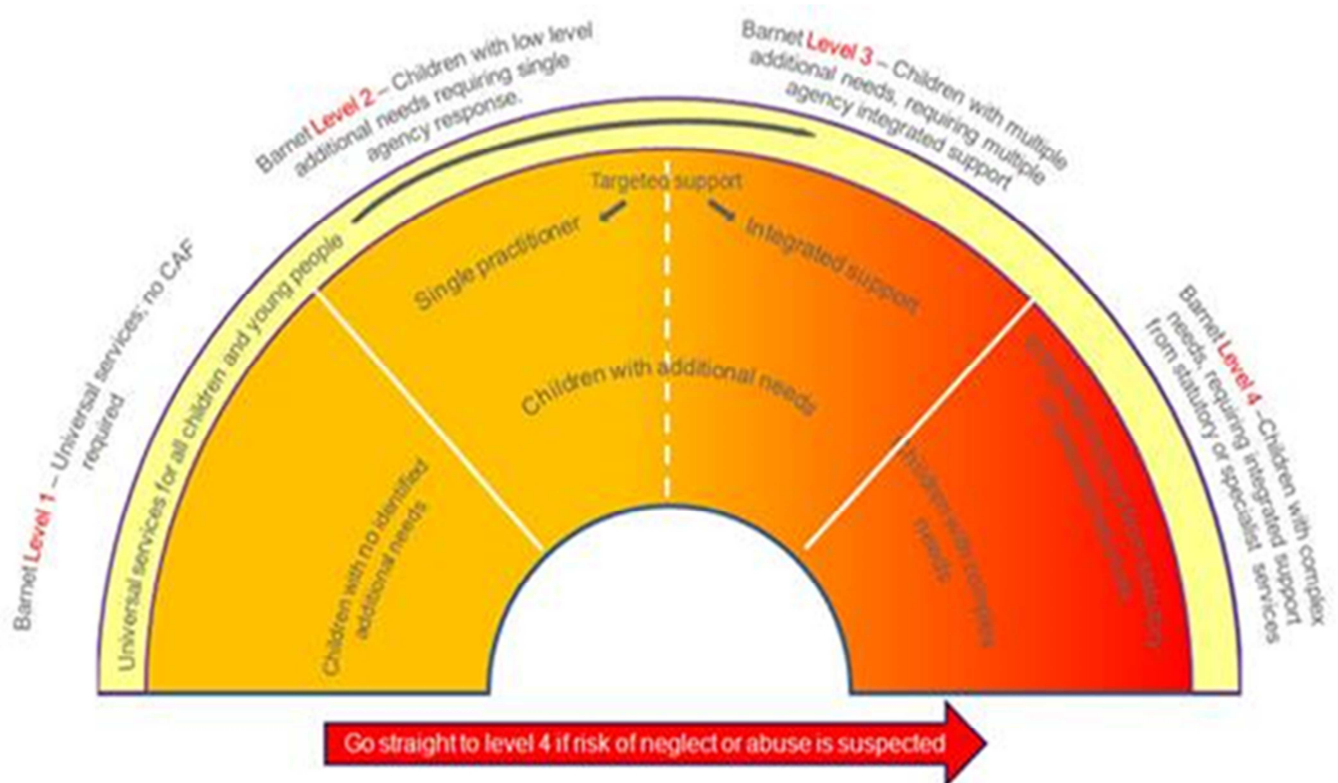
- Addressing multiple issues simultaneously
- Ensuring the voice of the child is heard

3. Using evidence-based interventions and monitoring them effectively

4. Levels of Need

Children and families can be seen as fitting into 4 categories of need:

Level of need	Definition of this type of Need	Which services do we use to address this need	Approximate number of open cases in Barnet (2014)	Approximate cost
Level 1	No identified additional needs. Response services are universal services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's Centres - Health Visitors - Libraries - Schools 	111 CAFs; 18932 registered users 15 CAFs 126896 adult users 13167 CYP users	£7.6m
Level 2	Child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met. This is the threshold for beginning a Common Assessment. Response services are universal support services and/or targeted services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's Centre Outreach - Schools - Targeted Youth Support 	c700 held by children's centres, Schools and targeted youth services	£4.7m
Level 3	Complex needs likely to require longer term intervention from statutory and/or specialist services. High level additional unmet needs - this will usually require a targeted integrated response, which will usually include a specialist service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safer Families - Intensive Family Focus - Youth Offending Service - Children in Need 	144 200 103 809	£15.5m
Level 4	Acute needs, requiring statutory intensive support. This in particular includes the threshold for child protection which will require Children's Social Care Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children in Care - Specialist Placements 	326 Looked After Children	£21.8m



In line with the principle of intervening as early as possible, our aim is to:

- a) prevent families moving up the tiers of need, by seeking to capture needs at the lowest level
- b) For children and families who are in the higher tiers, our aim is to move them down the tiers of intervention- building their capacity, and lowering the costs of intervention.

Needs analysis: What drives need in Barnet?

In order to design our early help services effectively we need to understand the needs of children and families in Barnet. Detailed analysis of Barnet data can be found in the *Early Intervention and Prevention Evidence Base and Services Analysis*. This analysis shows that, in Barnet, the following eight themes are driving escalation of need, poor outcomes and financial pressures for the Council and its partners:

1. Families affected by **domestic violence**
2. Those affected by **alcohol and/or drug misuse** issues, or living with a parent or carer with these issues
3. Children, young people or adults with **mental health** issues
4. Families where the **ability to parent** is limited which in some cases can lead to **neglect**

5. Families experiencing long term **unemployment**
6. Those involved with the **police or the criminal justice system**
7. Children who are regularly **missing school** or children who are **not school ready**
8. Those at risk of **child sexual exploitation**

5. THE EARLY HELP OFFER: EARLY INTERVENTION IN PRACTICE

Given the above needs, the key services that make up the Early Help Offer are divided into 4 categories:

Triage

- Triage of cases is provided by **The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** – this ensures the need of the family is identified.
- **The Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)** oversees the implementation of the early help system, using the 'Common Assessment Framework'. A protocol between Family Support and Early Intervention, and Children's Social Care (http://www.barnet.gov.uk/WorkingWithChildrenInBarnet/homepage/172/sharing_a_case_with_childrens_social_care) outlines the working practices for moving cases up/down and across the service. The CAF and Social Care Thresholds Guidance (January 2014) describes how the thresholds are applied to the referrals received. A copy of this document is available online (<http://www.barnet.gov.uk/WorkingWithChildrenInBarnet/downloads/file/737/>).

In house services

- **Intensive Family Focus (IFF)** works intensively with families with multiple needs;
- **Children's Centres-** provide a variety of advice and support for parents and carers. Their services are available to support families with children under 5 (from pregnancy to when the child goes into reception class at primary school).
- **Childcare:** the Early Years Vulnerable Families Offer entitles all children aged three and four to 15 hours per week of Free Early Education (FEE). Some two year olds are eligible to access up to 15 hours per week for FEE. The Early Years Vulnerable Children funding provides vulnerable children aged 6 months to five years with a funded place within a childcare setting.
- **The Youth and Community Service-** provides positive activities and targeted youth workers

- **The Safer Families project**- is an early intervention project which aims to identify children and families where domestic abuse and conflict is a feature of family life but, does not reach the threshold for social care intervention.

Commissioned Services

- CAMHS, IAPT
- Substance misuse programmes,
- Parenting programmes
- DV services (refuge, advocacy and support, perpetrator services, etc)
- CSE caseworker
- Peer-to-peer mentoring

Partners

Schools

Schools play an active role in Early Intervention and Prevention, working with children and young people on a daily basis to identify problems early and to intervene in order to improve both learning and wellbeing outcomes for the child.

Health

Health professionals including GPs, health visitors, midwives, sexual health and mental health practitioners are in a good position to identify issues which families or individuals may not be disclosing, especially in the Violence Against Women and Girls arena (domestic abuse; FGM; honour based violence, sexual exploitation).

Housing

Housing providers can be well placed to identify difficulties with anti-social behaviour, and even challenges like domestic violence. Sharing information and data when they spot families who are experiencing difficulties, playing a central role in coordinated assessments, and 'team around the family' responses, or even being the lead agency in these arrangements, can help ensure that families' housing and far wider needs are addressed promptly and effectively.

Police

We work in partnership with the police to intervene early with young people to reduce the involvement of children and young people in crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce the number of young people at risk of gang activity.

Voluntary and community sector

Voluntary and community organisations such as the voluntary youth sector often work with young people from positions of trust and can play an important role in identifying issues that individuals may not be disclosing to other partners. Increasing the contribution of the local VCS to the overall performance of services for children and families in Barnet is a priority.

A directory highlighting the main early intervention and prevention services provided across Barnet is included in Annex A.

6. MEASURING SUCCESS

How will we know if our Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy is effective?

Effective measurement is a core principle of our approach. It will be premised on the following:

- The CAF as the key assessment tool across early help services
- Moving towards the same measurement of progress across early help services (currently there are a number of different measures being used across the service)
- Regular review, and challenge of data starting with practitioners up to senior managers.

To measure success, we will assess whether our three key principles are being implemented in practice- so:

- Are we intervening as early as possible?
- Are we taking a multiagency approach, and is our partnership work effective, and are we responding to feedback from children and families?
- And most crucially, are we meeting needs when we intervene, and having positive impact on lives?

We have developed a dashboard which captures the above questions. The key components are:

1. CAF initiation
2. CAF progress

Category	Indicator	Rationale for selection	Target
Initiation of CAFs	Schools (particularly those with more deprived populations) involved in team around the setting	Are we intervening before CAF stage if possible? / are our deprived school represented?	Increase
	New CAF assessments	- More is better- but what is the right	Increase

	completed by Council teams and non-council teams	number of CAFs? - Are key partners pulling their weight (Health Visitors, Children's Centres, VCS)?	
	Routes of referral to the CAF team ("stepped down" from CSC vs straight to Early Intervention)	- What is the balance of our early interventions between stopping problems before they arise and de-escalating problems which have been to social care? - What's a good ratio? (ours is c. 50:50)	Monitor
	Prevalence of presenting risk factors (based on primary reason for CAF initiation)	Monitoring needs keeps services responsive (e.g. in Barnet serious youth violence) – our 8 themes come from monitoring needs	Monitor
Progress of CAFs once initiated	Total open CAF caseload (Tier 1 / Tier 2 / average duration)	Are our open CAFs on track? (total 900 CAFs; duration c 1yr) (expect to see more lower than higher tier, lower open times)	Decrease
	CAF episodes closed (Family needs met / referred to CSC / other)	Study of 2 year cohort of CAFs: 50% meeting needs; 20% to social care; 30% ? – how can we convert these into needs met?	Increase (needs met)

To further measure the effectiveness of our strategy we will develop indicators relating to the prevalence of the 8 key issues identified above, on an annual basis. We would expect a successful strategy to see progress against each of these themes (e.g. by seeing declining rates of mental health problems, prevalence of DV)

Finally, to assess the extent to which our strategy is fully embedded, and the strength of partnership, we will on an annual basis measure ourselves against the Early Intervention and Prevention Maturity Matrix. This matrix outlines the characteristics of organisations at different stages in the maturity of their Early Intervention and Prevention provision, ranging from 'Basic Level' through to 'Maturity'. The criteria are:

- **Planning** – Money mostly spent where there is evidence it can be used effectively.
- **Delivering** – Consistent approach to assessing and working with families across multiple agencies.
- **Evaluating** – All services are being monitored and their success measured.
- Everyone works to the same goals.
- **Leading** – A partnership actively owns the EI Plan.
- It is clear who is in charge of delivering which bits of the plan.
- Everyone talks about EI with the same understanding.
- **Family focus** – Children and families are often involved in deciding how services are designed and run.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governance Arrangements

The strategy will be overseen by: Barnet's Children's Trust Board, Chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services, and by the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board. In line with the changes to the Children's Trust Board being agreed in July 2014, the HWBB is also asked to oversee this strategy.

The operational governance of the strategy will be overseen by:

The Multi-Agency Group

The MAG brings together managers from all key partner agencies working with children and families in Barnet to ensure that early interventions using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) are working effectively. The MAG is aimed at Tier 2-3 early intervention for children and young people with additional needs, below the threshold of Children's Social Care. The core role of the MAG is to 'unblock' CAFs which have become 'stuck' in the system. The MAG also identifies and logs emerging and unmet need arising from CAF case discussion and communicates this back to the relevant lead for commissioning.

The CAF Steering Group

The CAF Steering Group key role is to quality assure CAFs from across the service, and consider training needs for the Children's workforce in relation to the CAF. The CAF steering group is also responsible for ensuring that the voice of the child is heard.

Across Family Services, Heads of Service will report to the **Senior Management Team** on progress against actions and targets in their respective areas bi-annually in accordance with the Business Management Framework for Family Services.