

	<h2>Cabinet</h2>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Title</b></p>	<p>Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024-2028)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date of Decision</b></p>	<p>14<sup>th</sup> May 2024</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Councillor Pauline Coakley-Webb – Cabinet Member for Family Friendly Barnet</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key/ Non-Key</b></p>	<p>Non-Key</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Urgent</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Appendices</b></p>	<p>Appendix A – Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2027</p> <p>Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)</p> <p>Appendix C: Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation Report</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Officer Contact Details</b></p>	<p>Soriyah Carnegie          Strategy and Insight Advisor  <a href="mailto:Soriyah.carnegie@barnet.gov.uk">Soriyah.carnegie@barnet.gov.uk</a>          Extensions 6226</p>
<h2>Summary</h2>	

On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Cabinet agreed plans to consult on the draft Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2028. This report provides feedback on the findings of the consultation and seeks agreement to publish the final strategy.

Between 12<sup>th</sup> January and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024, consultation took place with children and young people, Barnet Integrated Clinical Services (BICS) users, parents, carers, and Barnet’s wider public through both paper surveys and surveys hosted on Engage Barnet, focus groups and written feedback. All consultation respondents agreed the strategy’s principles and priorities.

## Decisions

1. Cabinet approves the Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2028.
2. Cabinet delegates to the Executive Director of Children and Families the execution of the strategy and all decisions regarding the implementation of the action plan.

## 1. Reasons for the Recommendations

### Introduction

- 1.1 The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is fundamental toward their development to live a healthy and happy life. Children and young people face a myriad of challenge and stressors such as family environments, peer relationships, academic pressures, Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and so on. As a result, there is a growing recognition on the importance of prioritising mental health and wellbeing from a young age and fostering environments that promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 Barnet Council are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people by providing the appropriate support at the right time, reducing stigma surrounding mental health and empower the next generation to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. The Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2028 has the following priorities:
  - Raising Awareness
  - Engagement with Children, Young People and those with service-experience
  - Nearby and Relevant support
  - Suicide Prevention
  - A System for Success
- 1.3 The cabinet report on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation) requested permission to consult on the Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy provided both an explanation and the relevant evidence to support the need for such a strategy in Barnet. This included national and local data, along with insights from children and young people which informed the developed of the draft strategy and priorities that were presented to Cabinet.
- 1.4 The strategy has been co-produced with children and young people, in line with our existing My Say Matters strategy. Initial engagement to determine the strategies priorities and principles focused on children and young people from groups within Barnet’s community who were proportionally less likely to engage with youth mental health services, to ascertain the necessary

improvements within the children and young people's mental health offer and direction of the strategy. This involved focus groups with a total of 59 young people at Meadway Barnet, The Pavilion Pupil Referral Unit, East Barnet School and VCSFE organisations, including Art Against Knives. There was also close working with organisations such as Noa Girls and Chazak, who shared their long-term engagement findings with young people within the Jewish Community, and found four main barriers that children and young people in Barnet found in accessing mental health and wellbeing support:

### **1. Awareness**

- Children and young people were not fully aware of Barnet's offer of support
- In response to this, the strategy's first proposal is to increase awareness of the offer through communication campaigns and by supporting professional and practitioners in effectively signposting children and young people to the appropriate services.

### **2. Perceptions**

- Of the services that children and young people were aware of, many expressed scepticisms around the efficacy of these services as well as feeling that the setting for accessing the support offer were too formal, leading to discomfort and reluctance in accessing the support that they were aware of.

### **3. Trust**

- Children and young people expressed that they did not feel comfortable speaking with practitioners, with concerns around confidentiality and a lack of rapport with mental health practitioners.
- The strategy's priority around nearby and relevant support looks at how the delivery of mental health and wellbeing support can utilise spaces and methods in which young people feel at ease and able to comfortably access support.

### **4. Cultural Barriers**

- There was a prevailing sense that Mental Health and Wellbeing practitioners were culturally far-removed from the children and young people who at the time, were not accessing these services at a proportional level.
- As part of the priority around ensuring that the support available is nearby and relevant, the strategy looks at supporting organisations within Barnet's Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCSFE) organisations to deliver mental health and wellbeing support in spaces that children and young people already access and are comfortable with.

1.5 The strategy aligns with the [Mental Health Charter](#), developed and co-produced simultaneously with the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The charter was

developed through extensive engagement and co-production with young people, and emphasizes enhancing the mental health system to uphold the aspirations of children and young people, as outlined in the strategy. The strategy's emphasis on engaging children and young people mirrors the charter's emphasis on co-production. Additionally, the strategy's focus on ensuring seamless support resonates with the charter's goal of preventing children and young people from slipping through the gaps or having to repeat their stories.

1.6 Consultation has been undertaken through the following approaches:

- One public focus group with three attendees
- Two focus groups for parent champions, with a total of five attendees
- Shared questionnaires with existing BICS service users, the CAMHS Youth Board, Barnet residents and winter BACE programme attendees, totalling 39 responses.

1.7 During the collaborative development of the strategy, the consultation process facilitated the participation of children, young people, and the wider community, allowing them to share their perspectives on the council initiative aimed at enhancing mental health and wellbeing amongst children and young people throughout the borough.

1.8 The consultation report (Appendix C) evidences wide support from all stakeholders towards the strategic approach set out in the strategy and amendments to the document have been made following the consultation.

## **2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended**

2.1 It is not viable to cease or delay the publication of the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and is therefore not recommended for the following reasons:

2.2 The strategy is a key tool in driving the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership's activities through making clear the partnership's priorities and encouraging accountability in meeting the outcomes in the document.

2.3 Additionally, engagement with stakeholders has been key throughout the development of the strategy, with feedback from children and young people forming the basis of its priorities, and feedback from the consultation included through amendment to the final draft.

2.4 Ceasing to progress with the publication of the strategy in light of both the positive feedback received, and the time taken for stakeholders to provide this feedback carries with it the risk of reputational damage to the London Borough of Barnet, with the suggestion being that the thoughts and concerns of children, young people, parents, and the wider public are not taken into consideration in the decisions made around the organisation's strategic direction.

## **3. Post Decision Implementation**

3.1 Should the strategy be approved for publication it will be designed by Good Impressions, prior to publication via the London Borough of Barnet's website.

3.2 Post-publication, it will be shared for promotion through partners on the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Board.

3.3 A 'We asked, you said, we did' article will be shared on Engage Barnet, as a summary of the consultation's outcomes and to share the final strategy.

- 3.4 The mechanism through which the progress made towards the outcomes outlined within the strategy will be monitored is in the form of an action plan which is currently in development.
- 3.5 Updates to the action plan will be provided by members of the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board and reported on at quarterly intervals to the Children & Young People's Partnership Board.
- 3.6 The Children and Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board will establish operational task and finish groups relating to the delivery of actions and including a mechanism for children and young people, and family engagement and coproduction.

## **4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations**

### **Corporate Plan**

- 4.1 The strategy specifically supports the corporate plan's aim (Barnet 2023-2026) of being a 'Family Friendly' borough where children and young people have the best start in life with the right support and safeguarding when they need it, and the right tools to live their lives successfully into adulthood.
- 4.2 The consultation allowed for members of the community, who had not yet been directly engaged with during the development of the strategy, to provide feedback on how well the strategy addresses the corporate plan's aim to ensure residents are aware of and are able to access services and activities at the right time and in the way that is most suitable for them.
- 4.3 The strategy also explicitly supports in the Corporate Plan's aim of tackling inequalities, as it not only encourages parity of esteem between mental and physical wellbeing, but it also has its basis in supporting those cohorts of children and young people who have historically been proportionally less likely to make use of and access mental health support in the borough.
- 4.4 The strategy's principles around accessibility and equitability also support in tackling inequalities, along with its priority around nearby and relevant support ensuring that mental health and wellbeing support is effectively distributed across the borough and is also accessible virtually to support all children and young people in an equitable way.

### **Sustainability**

- 4.5 Not Applicable.

### **Corporate Parenting**

- 4.6 The Corporate Parenting Strategy Pledge sets out what our children and young people can expect from us. Adherence to this pledge informs how we work as a local authority.

Our Corporate Parenting Pledge:

- We will support you to fulfil your dreams
- We will be there for you when you need us
- We will support your mental and physical health
- We will listen, communicate, and make decisions together with you
- We will support you to become independent and prepare for adulthood

- We will celebrate children and young people, their achievements, identity, and culture.

4.7 The strategy's implementation will directly support children and young people in our corporate care with complex mental health needs, along with supporting all children and young people in Barnet to thrive and have overall positive wellbeing.

### **Risk Management**

4.8 The risk associated with the publication of the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is that the outcomes set out within the document are not met during the strategy's lifespan.

4.9 To mitigate and control this risk, after publishing the strategy, an action plan will be developed. This plan will utilise outcomes stated in the strategy to formulate actions to be undertaken by members of the Barnet Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board.

### **Insight**

4.10 The consultation conducted regarding this strategy aligns with both the Community Participation Strategy and the corporate guidelines on engagement and consultation. Specifically, regarding the principles set out within Barnet's Community Participation strategy, the consultation:

- Engaged residents in the places they feel safe, comfortable, and familiar by offering engagement opportunities with BACE providers and virtually focus groups where residents were able to engage from where they felt was most appropriate for them.
- Sought the views of all our communities, particularly children and young people, minoritised groups and those less often heard.
- Formed part of our ongoing dialogue through the lifecycle of the strategy's development and the proposed services within it.
- Promoted transparency, openness, and accessibility through encouraging participation in our strategy development.

4.11 The consultation also explicitly supported in Barnet's vision to be a Family Friendly London Borough through ensuring that our strategic approach to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of Barnet's children and young people is sufficiently equipped to support young people and families in the ways that are most accessible, equitable and evidence based.

4.12 Suggestions to improve the strategy have been incorporated in the final draft, and included:

- The rewording of certain section of the text to make the document more accessible to those who may not be familiar with the mental health services.
- The inclusion of data around waiting time for access to mental health support services for transparency, and to help children and young people and their families to understand their experiences on waiting lists within the wider context.

4.13 Further suggestions to be explored and to inform the strategy's action plan include:

- Improved access to mental health support within Child and Family Early Help Hubs and community centres.
- The development of a standardised local offer document to be made available at all relevant agencies, including GPs, Schools, and Hospitals.
- Enhancement of the promotion of physical wellbeing opportunities for children and young people as an avenue for supporting mental wellbeing.

4.14 Further insight, including data from the North Central London Integrated Care Partnership has driven the development of the strategy and has been included within the document, in line with the strategy's principles of ensuring that all proposed work within the children and young people's mental health system is both evidence-based and impact-driven.

## Social Value

4.15 Not applicable as this is not a proposal for the commission of a public service in accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013.

## 5. Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)

5.1 Costs associated with designing the strategy for full publication and printing are minimal and have been included within existing budgets

5.2 The implementation of the strategy will utilise existing resources and partnerships with local organisations and programmes, including the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) the Resilient Schools Programme and BICS.

5.3 Resource implications additional to these existing provisions are not anticipated.

## 6. Legal Implications and Constitution References

6.1 The consultation associated with this strategy aligned with [Section B of the Principles of Good Governance](#) under the Code of Corporate Governance, by encouraging and ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

6.2 As stated in the final supporting principle in Section B, the consultation followed the guidance set out within the Consultation & Engagement Strategy, in that it involved engagement with residents and organisations listed within section 6 of the strategy and made use of several of the engagement mediums listed in section 7 of the strategy, including paper surveys, online surveys and focus groups.

6.3 Under the Council's Constitution, Part 2D the terms of reference of Cabinet sets out the responsibilities which includes: Recommending major new policies (and amendments to existing policies) to the Council for approval as part of the Council's Policy Framework and implementing those approved by Council; and Approving policies that are not part of the policy framework.

## 7. Consultation

- 7.1 A full public consultation on Barnet’s Children and Young People Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been completed since the plans were approved at the November 2023 Cabinet meeting. A detailed report on the consultation can be found in Appendix C.
- 7.2 The consultation involved focus groups, surveys and discussion with children and young people, parents, mental health support service users and the wider public.
- 7.3 Feedback on the strategy draft was overwhelmingly positive, with those that contributed echoing the need for such a strategy in Barnet.
- 7.4 The strategy (Appendix A) has since been amended following the feedback received, with further clarity in some of the strategy’s wording, and the addition of data pertaining to waiting lists across the NCL.

## **8. Equalities and Diversity**

- 8.1 Regarding the protected characteristics as stated under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2028 has no foreseen negative impact on the following protected characteristics:
- Age
  - Disability
  - Gender reassignments
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual orientation
  - Marriage and civil partnership
- 8.2 Please see Appendix B for a full Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA).

## **9. Background Papers**

- 9.1 Cabinet – 14 November 2023, Item 13: Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation Cabinet Report  
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1010&MId=11433&Ver=4>
- 9.2 [Engage Barnet Consultation](#)