

Child Poverty Strategy 2020-2024

Introduction

The 2010 Child Poverty Act places a requirement on local authorities to assess the needs of children living in poverty in their area and produce a child poverty strategy. According to the Act, a child is defined as being in poverty when he/she lives in a household with an income below 60% of the UK's average.

Our previous child poverty strategy was set out in the Children and Young People's Plan 2016-20 and supported Barnet's family friendly vision which is focused on making Barnet the most family friendly borough in London and an even better place for all families to live. Barnet has made progress since then and the appendix to this strategy sets out some of the progress that has been made against of the priorities in the last strategy. This progress is highlighted in Barnet having fewer children living in poverty with 14.0% of children under the age of 16 living in low income families in 2016 compared to 24.9% in 2006. However, this still remains an issue as child poverty is a growing problem affecting over 4 million children leading to damaging health as well as futures.

Children living in poverty are more likely to;

- Have poor physical health
- Experience mental health problems
- Have low sense of well-being
- Underachieve at school
- Have employment difficulties in adult life
- Experience lower social mobility
- Experience social deprivation
- Feel unsafe
- Experience stigma and bullying at school
- Be disproportionately affected by anti-social and criminal activity

Research shows that causes of poverty are complex with a number of crucial areas of focus emerging, such as cuts in benefit, low pay and rising living costs. Tackling child poverty needs to recognise this and requires action targeted at both the child themselves, and at their wider environment, including their family, and the community in which the child lives. All interventions must consider targeted communications campaigns as a primary tool for raising awareness and behavior change.

This new child poverty strategy restates Barnet's pledge to tackle child poverty as part of the family friendly vision, through priorities and actions to build families and children's resilience to ensure better outcomes.

Child Poverty and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

We are committed to upholding children's rights within Barnet and over the next three years, the London Borough of Barnet, including all its delivery partners, will work with UNICEF to progressively achieve a number of core outcomes within the Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2023. The overarching ambition is for the borough to be recognised by UNICEF UK as a UNICEF Child Friendly Community in 2020.

There are several articles from the UNCRC which are relevant to child poverty.

Article 3 (best interest of the child) The best interest of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 6 (life, survival and development) Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

Article 24 (health and health services) Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy.

Article 26 (social security) Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits.

Article 27 (adequate standard of living) Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development.

Child poverty in Barnet

Child poverty can be assessed in many ways. On an annual basis, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) produces statistics on the percentage of children in low income families (i.e. children aged under 16 years old living in families receiving out of work benefits or tax credits, where their reported income is less than 60% median income). On this measure of child poverty, 14.0% of children in Barnet under the age of 16 were living in low income families in 2016, which was significantly lower than both London (18.8%) and England (17.0%). Poverty rates are also higher for people living in families that include a disabled adult or child than they are for people living in families where no one is disabled.

Child poverty - London authorities

Within the local authorities in London, Barnet is ranked 25th on child poverty, using this measure (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percentage on children living in low income families, in London local authorities, London and England, under 16s, 2016

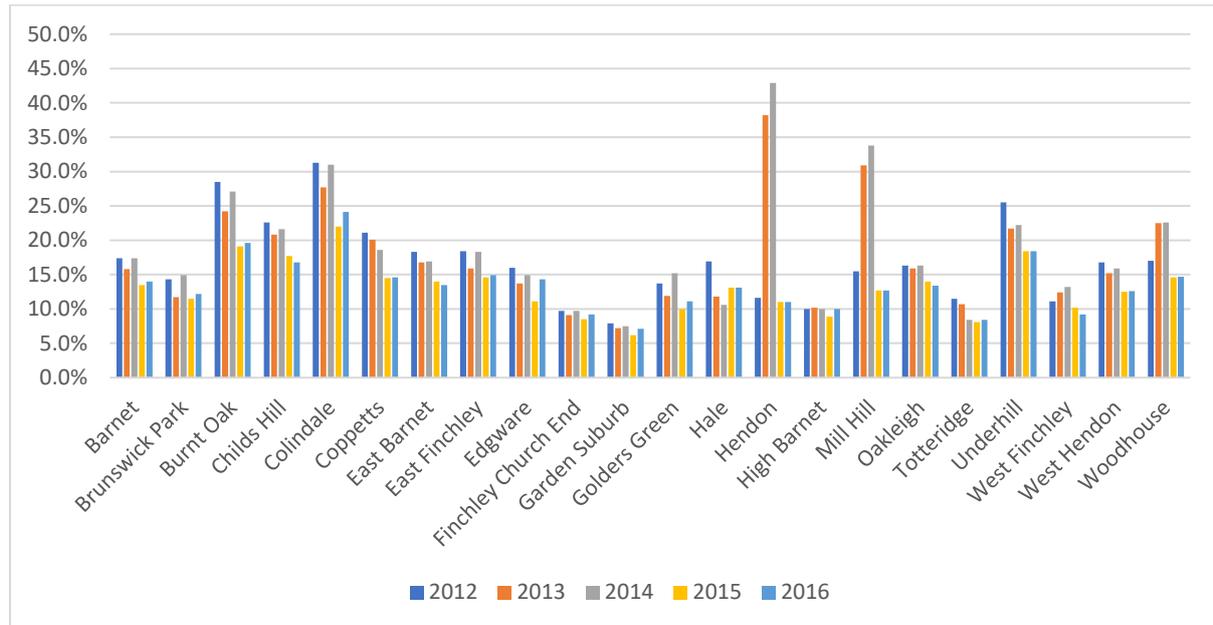
Area	Recent Trend	Neighbour Rank	Count	Value
England	↓	-	1,707,835	17.0
London region	↓	-	307,710	18.8
Islington	↓	-	9,840	30.6
Tower Hamlets	↓	-	16,475	30.3
Camden	↓	-	8,165	27.3
Westminster	↓	-	6,680	27.3
Hackney	↓	-	13,710	24.7
Lambeth	↓	-	12,295	23.4
Southwark	↓	-	12,355	23.2
Lewisham	↓	-	13,285	22.6
Barking and Dagenham	↓	-	12,810	22.5
Enfield	↓	-	16,670	22.2
Greenwich	↓	-	12,310	21.8
Haringey	↓	-	11,020	21.3
Hammersmith and Fulham	↓	-	5,335	20.6
Kensington and Chelsea	↓	-	3,175	20.5
Newham	↓	-	15,300	20.1
Waltham Forest	↓	-	11,380	19.4
Brent	↓	-	12,110	18.0
Wandsworth	↓	-	8,465	17.2
Ealing	↓	-	11,910	16.9
Havering	↓	-	7,805	16.5
Bexley	↓	-	7,730	16.3
Croydon	↓	-	12,685	16.1
Hillingdon	↓	-	9,830	16.0
Redbridge	↓	-	9,230	14.7
Barnet	↓	-	10,000	14.0
Hounslow	↓	-	7,610	13.8
Bromley	↓	-	8,020	13.2
Merton	↓	-	5,195	13.1
Harrow	↓	-	6,225	12.9
Kingston upon Thames	↓	-	3,380	11.7
Sutton	↓	-	3,850	9.8
City of London	↓	-	60	9.6
Richmond upon Thames	↓	-	2,795	8.5

Source: Public Health England (PHE, 2019). Child and Maternal Health Profile based on HMRC Child Poverty Statistics. Key: Red = Significantly higher than the London average. Green = Significantly lower than the London average.

Barnet 2012-2016

An analysis of child poverty in Barnet prior to 2016 offers an insight into a consistently changing picture. Figure 2 reveals the previous 5 years highlighting variation within individual wards and across the borough, with the overall trend heading down.

Figure 2 – Barnet Child Poverty 2012–2016

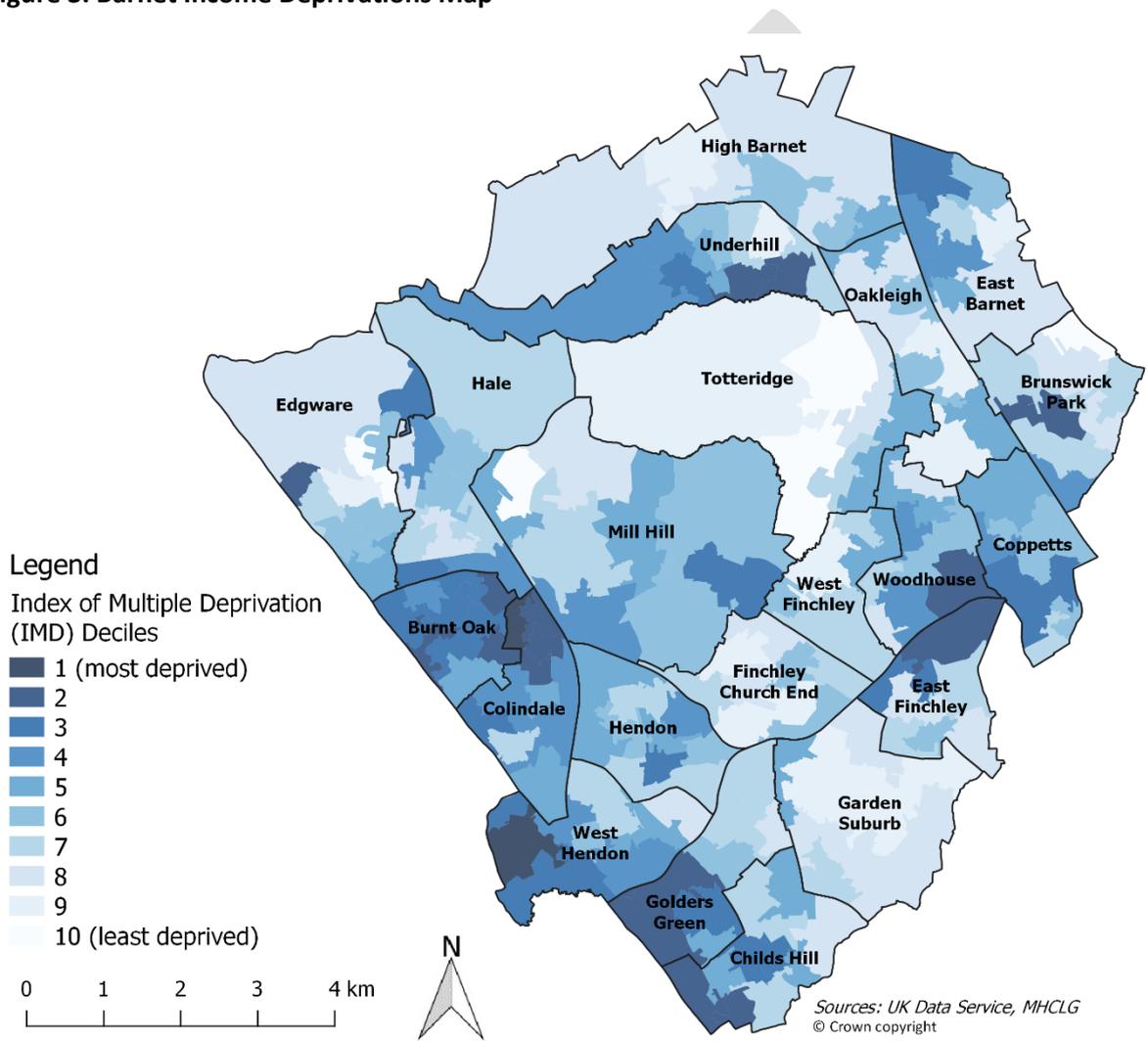


Source: Based on data from HMRC.

Child poverty - Barnet 2016

The latest research into child poverty shows Barnet has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2015) score of 17.8, making it one of the least deprived boroughs in London. However, even in this relatively prosperous borough, there are pockets of deprivation, many of which are concentrated in the west and south. (See Fig 3)

Figure 3. Barnet Income Deprivations Map



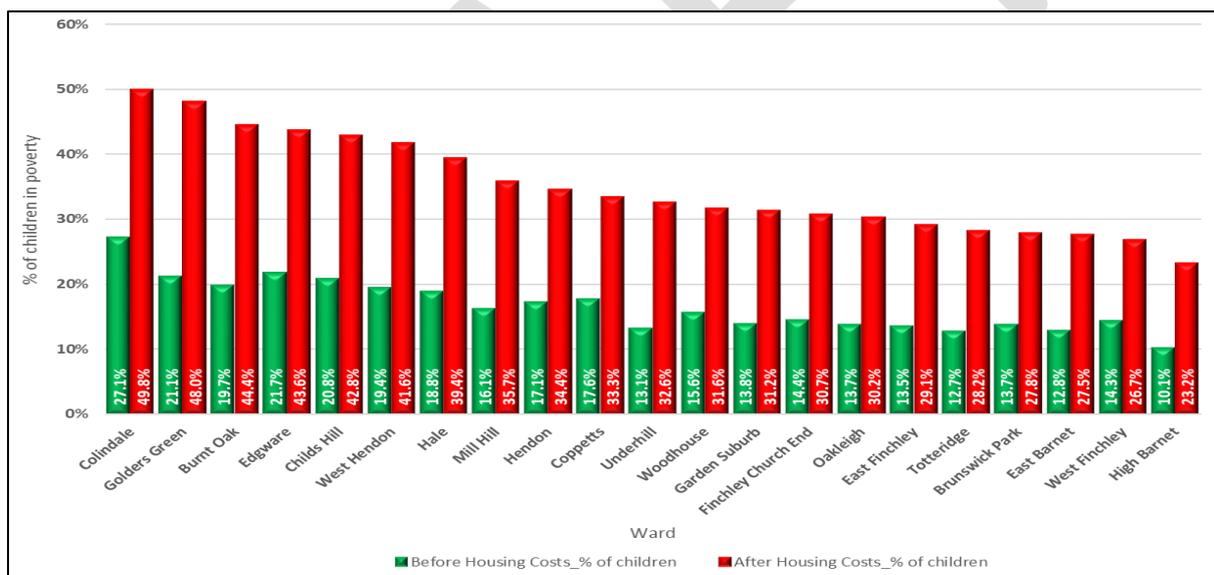
Between 2006 and 2009, the percentage of Barnet children aged under 16 living in low income families was significantly higher than the England average. In 2010, this proportion became similar to the national average and between 2011 and 2016 it was consistently significantly lower than the England average. In 2006, a quarter of Barnet children (24.9%) aged under 16 lived in low income families, but since then this percentage has shown an overall downward trend. By 2016, the

proportion of Barnet children living in poverty had fallen to 14.0%, which is significantly lower than the 2006 figure. Between 2006 and 2016, the percentage of children in poverty in Barnet was consistently significantly lower than the London average and the number of children in poverty had fallen from 15,985 to 10,000.

On an annual basis, the Centre for Research in Social Policy produces figures of child poverty for the End Child Poverty Coalition for each ward, local authority and parliamentary constituency in the UK. These estimated figures are based on HMRC data on children living in low income families and are adjusted based on the Labour Force Survey to reflect in-work poverty more accurately.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of children within Barnet wards living in poverty during 2017/18, before and after housing costs have been taken into consideration. The green bars in the chart show the percentage of children living in poverty before housing costs have been taken into consideration and the red bars, after housing costs have been included. For Barnet, during 2017/18, the highest proportion of children living in poverty (after housing costs are considered) was found in Colindale (50%) and the lowest in High Barnet (23%), during the same period.

Figure 4 - Percentage of children living in poverty for wards in Barnet, before and after housing costs, 2017/18



Source: End Child Poverty Coalition (2019) based on adjusted data from HMRC.

A number of food banks now operate in Barnet providing families experiencing poverty with essential support. These are run by independent organisations and accordingly have different referral processes. The lack of data on food bank usage and food aid usage was identified as a gap within the food security needs analysis completed June 2018. There is also a lack of clarity around food security data. A Public Health report identified key geographical areas at risk as well as population groups. These findings fed into the Food Security Action Plan (found here: <https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s55446/Appendix%20%20Barnet%20Food%20Security%20Action%20Plan%202019.pdf>).

Recognising the potential health impacts of food insecurity on child poverty, Barnet Public Health is funding a part-time position within Young Barnet Foundation to set up holiday hunger programmes in the borough and are exploring ways to increasing the uptake of free schools meals and healthy start vouchers. Furthermore, ways are being explored for frontline council staff to record when referrals to food banks are made. This will enable future food security needs analysis to record food bank usage, referrals and demographics.

What young people say about Poverty in Barnet

Young people's opinions are important and have helped shape our priorities within this strategy.

Barnet Youth Board members were involved in a workshop looking at tackling child poverty in London ahead of London Challenge Poverty Week in October 2019 organised by the 4 in 10 London's child poverty campaign network. During the workshop young people had the opportunity to amplify their voices by sharing their views on what poverty means to young people and what they feel should be improved. The workshop captured the young people through film-and was later launched at the London Challenge Poverty Week Summit. The film was seen by local decision makers and members of the wider public.

Young people shared their views of living in Barnet as part of the wider city of London.

Young people stated:

- *"in a society like ours it's not ok that, 40% of all children in London live in poverty"*
- *"in a society like ours it's not ok that parents are not given enough money to survive on"*
- *" it's not right that councils don't do enough to support the families living in their properties"*
- *"if young Londoners are being held back by poverty- it bothers us because everyone deserves to have an education and have aspirations they know they can achieve"*

What young people feel needs to be improved for children in Barnet:

- *Young carers: Young people not having extra caring responsibilities*
- *Education: Young people supported to stay in education*
- *Childcare: More childcare support for low income families*
- *Transport: travel can be expensive to get around the city and if out of work or needing to travel for work this can be a barrier*
- *Knife crime: Young people who live in poverty who need money are attracted to be involved with gangs or sell drugs. As a result, they are at risk so carry a knife to protect themselves*

Action Plan 2020-2024

A commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and families in the borough is shared by all services across Barnet. With financial spending falling, there is a need for partners to focus on working together to address the drivers of child poverty, building resilience to improve future outcomes.

To address child poverty and its contributing factors, there is no single response that will succeed on its own. Services need to work together on a whole family basis in order to improve outcomes and wellbeing for children living in poverty. All interventions must consider targeted communications campaigns as a primary tool for raising awareness and driving behavior change. Evidence suggests that single agency responses are unlikely to affect the change a child and family requires to escape deep-rooted poverty.

Partners have agreed to retain the existing priorities but to enhance the associated actions to tackle child poverty in the borough

Priority 1: Strengthening families and early years

- Deliver more initiatives through Children's Centres in the 0-19 Early Help hubs including access to training and employment opportunities.
- Proactive publicising and enabling of increased access to 30-hours and Free Entitlement to Education (FEE2) offer
- Introduce termly parenting programmes to run across the borough with more 0-19 staff are being trained in specific parenting programmes such as Strengthening Families
- Increase use of 0-19 hubs as venues that distribute food bank vouchers and work with the Voluntary sector around the Holiday Hunger Scheme
- Expand the role of Health Visitors to support new parents including co-delivery of health promotion groups and workshops in targeted areas and introduction of antenatal and 6 – 8 week review contacts prioritizing vulnerable families.
- Work with partners to increase uptake of childhood vaccinations in Barnet across all socioeconomic groups
- Improve access to healthy food in early years by increasing the number of families accessing the Healthy Start Scheme
- Continue to refine the comprehensive multiagency perinatal mental health pathway for Barnet, including 1:1 support for vulnerable parents.
- Strengthening identification and referral to services for families in need

Priority 2: Developing resilience and improving education

- Seek to raise achievement of all pupils, with particular focus on those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable.
- Work with schools to maximise the percentage that are good or outstanding.
- Work with schools to identify young people at risk of NEET and to provide them with additional support to help ensure they progress to education, employment or training.
- Challenge and support schools to make effective use of Pupil Premium funding for the benefit of pupils from low-income families.
- Improve the attainment and progress of children in care.
- Increase the number of special school and specialist school places for pupils with SEND, to ensure they are in the right educational environment to do well.
- Champion the educational progress and attainment of pupils with SEND
- Work with the schools to promote a whole schools approach to supporting emotional resilience, good mental health, and a healthy lifestyle throughout the school community including:
 - Further expand the Resilient Schools Programme to 75% of schools in Barnet by 2021
 - Further expansion of the Healthy Schools and Healthy Early Years programmes.
 - Work with schools and partners to deliver high quality health and healthy relationship education, including targeted sexual health, contraception, relationship educational support to vulnerable groups.
 - Work to improve the number of children and young people maintaining a healthy weight, included targeted work with schools with a high prevalence of excess weight among their pupils.
 - Work with schools and young people to improve physical activity levels for all children and young people in Barnet including supporting primary schools to implement 20 mins of extra daily physical activity such as Mayor Golden Kilometre (MGK) or the daily shake up.
- Implement a pilot training scheme to prepare care leavers for independent living.

Priority 3: Delivering equal access to opportunities

- Supporting the uptake of free school meals and healthy start vouchers as part of Food Security Action Plan (FSAP)
- Seek opportunities to support at-risk children to access food 365 days a year to minimise the health impacts of chronic food insecurity
- Roll out and promote programmes for work experience, apprenticeships, training, volunteering, and paid employment, including supported opportunities for people with SEND..

- Ensure regeneration projects promote community cohesion
- Improve access to advice and support for people in poverty by co-locating and better coordinating services – e.g. benefits and housing advice services, Jobcentre Plus and careers services
- Lobby the Mayor of London to provide free travel on London Underground for 16-18 year olds to align with buses and trams.

Priority 4: Targeting support

- Implementation of Youth Homelessness Strategy and Rough Sleeper Strategy providing support to prevent young people rough sleeping.
- Prevent families from becoming homeless and reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation.
- Implement new Mental Health Support Teams and voluntary sector projects within Barnet's west locality from January 2020 for children and young people with mild to moderate mental health needs.
- Develop further targeted work to promote all prevention and Early Help services and expand access routes for our local services to enable more self-referral.
- Ensure children in care and care leavers are appropriately prepared and supported to live independently.
- Ensure care leavers are upskilled in budget cooking and have access to food education as identified in the Food Security Action Plan.
- Introduce post diagnostic workshops for children with SEND, which help parent-carers of children with SEND are aware of their financial entitlements and rights, alongside understanding their child's diagnosis.
- Increase the accommodation, employment, training and leisure opportunities for children, young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families to make successful transitions to adulthood.
- Collaborate with voluntary sector to set up Holiday Health programmes in the borough.
- Targeted outreach for those most vulnerable to anti-social and criminal activity, educating them about avoiding and managing risks, and instilling confidence to address their fears and perceptions of threats.
- Continue to provide council tax exemption to support care leavers living independently.

APPENDIX

Progress since Barnet Child Poverty Action Plan 2016-2020

Since the last agreed action plan there has been significant progress against partners' key priorities and actions taken to combat child poverty in Barnet. The action plan focused on four key priorities and a series of actions to achieve these. Progress since the last plan was published is highlighted below.

Priority 1: Strengthening families and early years

- **Implement our vision of resilience based practice in social work** – Ofsted action plan set out the improvement journey for change and gave focus to transform services, especially social care, rapidly changing ratings from inadequate to good
- **Support families who are able to take up work, promoting employment support programs and schemes such as employment coaching** - children's centers worked with local partners such as Barnet and Southgate College to provide activities for parents of children 0-5 to access training opportunities and support to gain employment. In addition two employment advisors from DWP worked with the 0-19 Early Help Hubs and across Family Services to again support and enable adults in households where there are children and YP to access training and employment.
- **Expand childcare offer to families through increase to 30 hours of free childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds so that parents/carers can work** - the 30-hour offer is in place with more than 1100 families accessing this offer
- **Expand our free childcare offer to 2-year-olds for families on low incomes so that parents/ carers can work** - more providers are delivering the 2-year- old offer and at the end of the summer term 2019 there were 783 children accessing their free entitlement
- **Promote parenting classes in the borough to ensure families feel confident able to support the development of their children** - three Early Help hubs have been established across the borough providing parenting programmes along with 1-1 parenting support. Staff training is part of workforce development and hubs link to community partners delivering parenting programmes to ensure help is received quickly and to avoid duplication
- **Help families develop strong support networks in their communities** - the three 0-19 Early Help hubs have been in place for just a year with over 20 organisations working together developing teams around family plans. As of the 31st August 2019 the hubs were working with 399 families/637 children.
- **Make sure that children in the council's care are looked after in stable families** - the majority of looked after children are placed with carers who are committed to providing them with a stable family life. Ongoing foster care recruitment remains a priority to ensure

our looked after children are placed with the right families to provide them with a stable home life.

- **Continue to target specialist multi-agency support through our Families First initiative to Barnet's most vulnerable families** - Barnet's Family First programme has been very successful with over 80% of our target reached (1,821 claims of our 2,220 target) with expectation of 100% by the required date of 31st March 2020

Priority 2: Developing resilience and improving education

- **Ensure children have access to high quality education at good or outstanding schools** - the percentage of Good and Outstanding schools in Barnet is now 94.3% and above National, Inner London and Outer London averages. The percentage of primary and secondary schools in Barnet rated Good or Outstanding is in the top 10% of the country.

95.1% of Barnet pupils attend a Good or Outstanding school and is above National, Inner London and Outer London averages. The percentage of pupils attending a Good or Outstanding school is in the top 10% of the country.
- **Focus on closing the attainment gap at schools** - Barnet's GCSE pupils have topped 2019 league tables for 'Progress 8' results. These results gauge the progress made by students during their time at secondary school, and young people in Barnet were ranked top out of all 151 local authorities in the country. Barnet also ranked second nationally for Attainment 8 scores. At Key Stage 2, Barnet is 7th in the country for the number of pupils reaching the expected standards in Reading, Writing and Maths, and we are also 7th in the country at A-Level, for the percentage of pupils scoring three A* to A grades.
- **Develop programmes to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment and support (NEETs)** - The percentage of young people aged 16 -17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has remained low as a result of the work by the post-16 education and skills team and schools to identify young people at risk of NEET and to provide them with additional support to help ensure they progress to education, employment or training. The average percentage for December 2018 to February 2019 was 1.1% compared to a London average of 1.7% and a national average of 2.6%. Barnet was ranked the 5th best LA on this measure.
- **Link education funding more closely to need through pupil premium** - pupil premium funding is made available to schools from the DfE at a set rate for pupils entitled to free school meals. Schools are expected to use the funding to support pupils from deprived backgrounds. The Education and Skills service supports schools by offering to carry out Pupil Premium reviews.

Priority 3: Developing equal opportunities

- **Roll out and promote programmes for work experience, apprenticeships, training, volunteering, and paid employment** - through working in partnership with developers, colleges and others, support has been provided to help residents improve their skills and find employment. In 2018-19, 59 apprentices started on development sites across the borough, more than 30 residents were supported into jobs and work experience on site as were 19 volunteers. The council continues to organise regular Employability Group meetings to help ensure that agencies working across the borough are coordinating their activities and partnering to support those most in need.
- **Make sure regeneration projects promote community cohesion** - regeneration schemes have invested substantially in the promotion of community cohesion often through council led public consultation: for example on parks and open space masterplans close to regeneration schemes and through developer-led resident engagement on estate housing schemes keeping local people informed and inviting views on plans on phased transformation.

Since 2016 community engagement activities based on regeneration estates have successfully delivered employment, training and other outreach support services to local communities. Newly built schools, youth, play and health facilities have targeted children, young people and all age groups ensuring appropriate services are provided alongside infrastructure required to meet the needs of a growing population

- **Improve access to advice and support for people in poverty by co-locating and better coordinating services for example benefits and housing advice services, Jobcentre Plus and careers services currently provided by Burnt Oak Opportunity Support Team (BOOST)** - in 2018/19 BOOST advisers gave benefit advice to 836 people and helped 1,467 with universal credit claims.

The Skills Escalator project, which is aimed at low-income households and provides access to training and career advice to help those in work to increase their incomes. The new job retention project going live this autumn will help working people to sustain employment when going through a period of poor mental health. In 2018/19 BOOST had more than 11,000 visits and helped 227 people into work.

Priority 4: Targeting support

- **Ensure there is the right treatment and support available for those in crisis** - following consultation with YP and a review of local needs, we implemented the Barnet Integrated Clinical Service within the 0-19 Early Model and commissioned a wide range of early help mental health and family support services across school and community settings. This include counselling, psychotherapy and parenting support services as well as voluntary sector projects that support community and emotional resilience and target priority groups.
- **ACTION: Review mental health support available for children and young people – intervening early to stop issues from escalating** - we continue to commission targeted support to young carers, as well as a family coaching service that provides practical and emotional support in the home to some of our most vulnerable families, including those affected by mental health, alcohol or substance misuse or domestic violence.

Barnet's Adolescent Crisis Team (ACT) was established in November 2019 to ensure timely specialist support and intervention for children and young people experiencing a mental health crisis.