

Draft Life Chances Strategy 2020-2024 consultation

Headline findings

5 November 2020 – 4 December 2020



Children's Services

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings from the draft Life Chances Strategy public consultation.

Below are the key headlines from the consultation and a summary of the approach. A full breakdown of the results is provided in section two of this report.

1.1 Method

- The consultation consisted of an online questionnaire published on <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk> together with a consultation document which provided information about our plans to 2024 and the challenges we face, plus our proposed outcomes and objectives under each outcome. It also set out our approach to delivery.
- Paper copies of the consultation were also made available on request.

1.2. Response to the consultation

- A total of 21 online questionnaires were completed. It should be noted that due to the low response the results should be treated with caution and throughout the report percentages and numbers have been reported on.

1.3. Summary of key findings

1.3.1 Priorities outlined in the plan

- The majority of those responding to the questionnaire agree with all the priorities the council is proposing to focus on for the next four years. Over two thirds of those responding to the questionnaire agreed with all the priorities identified in the Life Chances Strategy.
- **Strengthening families and early years, Developing resilience and improving education** and **Delivering equal access to opportunities** priorities received the most support with 80% of respondents (16 out of 20 respondents) agreeing with these priorities.
- This was followed by the priority **Targeting support** with three-quarters of respondents (75%, 15 out of 25) agreeing with this priority.
- Overall, 7 out of 10 (70%, 14 out of 20) respondents agreed with all the priorities listed

1.3.2 Actions under each priority

- There was a similar level of agreement for the actions set out under each priority, with the majority (at least three-quarters) agreeing with all the actions recorded.
- Under the **Strengthening Families and Early Years** priority, almost 8 out of 10 respondents agreed with the actions listed (77%, 13 out of 17)
- There was a similar level of support for the actions identified under **Developing resilience and improving education** with just over 7 out of 10 respondents agreeing (71%, 10 out of 14)
- Nearly 8 out of 10 respondents agreed (77%, 10 out of 13) with actions identified under the **Delivering access to equal opportunities** priority.
- Again, there was a similar level of support under **Targeting support** priority, over 7 out of 10 respondents agreed (77%, 10 out of 13) with the actions listed.

1.3.3 Views on the main priorities

- Within the questionnaire respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make on the priorities that had been identified; if there was anything else that should be considered and if they had any further comments on our approach.
- The response to these questions were varied, however there were number of common themes that were evident. The most common themes have been summarised below:

“Improving the deprived areas of Barnet by way of more early years support, ending the need for Food Banks, more low cost housing at realistic cost for those on low incomes”

“More support for special needs and families in benefits free computers for all children on free school meals”

“More catching up for secondary school pupils”

“early intervention when problems arise - at the moment you can really only get help when crisis is reached and that is obviously too late and the damage (sometimes lasting) has been done”

1.3.4 Views on strengthening families and early years

Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make on the priority **Strengthening families and early years** that had been identified; if any actions had been missed under each priority, and if they had any further comments on our approach.

The response to these questions were varied, however there were number of common themes that were evident. The most common themes have been summarised below:

“Improve the service level offered by home visitors”

“mentoring/coaching/buddy system from YP who have been through similar situations”

“Families where the children may need extra support, where their parents are abusive or toxic”

1.3.5 Views on Developing resilience and improving education

Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make on the priority **Developing resilience and improving education** that had been identified; if any actions had been missed under each priority, and if they had any further comments on our approach.

The response to these questions were varied, however there were number of common themes that were evident. The most common themes have been summarised below:

“Provide more support for the mental health of students, and more catch up for secondary school pupils, and security over exams”

“More funding for trained staff to support the complex needs of children with long-term medical conditions or disabilities so that they can be supported and kept safe in schools.”

“need to improve further education options for children with SEND - limited options available especially for those unable to attend college”

1.3.6 Views on Delivering equal access to opportunities.

Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make on the priority **Delivering equal access to opportunities** that had been identified; if any actions had been missed under each priority, and if they had any further comments on our approach.

The response to these questions were varied, however there were number of common themes that were evident. The most common themes have been summarised below:

“Consider children with mental health issues, whether or not they are in CAMHS”

“Support for siblings from special needs families some social provision for special needs that is local Finchley”

“new opportunities for further education for those with complex needs are required”

“Consider alternative provision for children with SEMH - existing schools are not able to do this.”

1.3.7 Views on Targeting support.

Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make on the priority **Targeting support** that had been identified; if any actions had been missed under each priority, and if they had any further comments on our approach.

The response to these questions were varied, however there were number of common themes that were evident. The most common themes have been summarised below:

“More financial support for families with special needs”

“Consider how most children with mental health issues go unknown, by parents/carers, teachers and CAMHS”

“How are you going to identify at risk or vulnerable families”

2. Detailed findings

This section sets out the full findings from the draft Life Chances strategy consultation.

2.1 Summary of approach and method

- The consultation was open from 5 November 2020 to 4 December 2020. The consultation consisted of an online questionnaire published on <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk> together with a hyperlink to the draft Life Chances Strategy. Paper copies of the consultation were also made available on request.
- The consultation was widely promoted via the council's residents' magazine, Barnet First; the Communities Together Network newsletter and Schools Circular as well as social media channels including Facebook and external organisations.
- The questionnaire was developed to invite views on the plan, in particular, the four key priorities for children and young people, and the actions that sit beneath each priority.

2.2 Response profile

- A total of 21 questionnaires were completed.

The table below over the page shows the profile of the type of stakeholders who responded to the questionnaire. As mentioned in the summary due to the small sample size results should be treated with caution and have been reported on in terms of numbers as well as percentages.

Table 1: Profile of those who responded to the draft Life Chances consultation

Stakeholder	Response	
	%	Base
Barnet resident	77%	10
Barnet business	0%	0
Barnet resident and business	0%	0
Representing a voluntary / community organisation	8%	1
Representing a public-sector organisation	0%	0
Other (please specify)	15%	2
Total	100%	13

2.2 Calculating and reporting on results

- The results for each question are based on “valid responses”, i.e. all those providing an answer (this may or may not be the same as the total sample) unless otherwise specified. The base size may therefore vary from question to question.
- Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi-coded - i.e. respondents could give more than one answer. The open-ended questions are multi-coded, as respondents could write in more than one comment, and therefore the tables on verbatim comments add up to more than 100%.

2.3. Profile of protected characteristics

The council is required by law (the Equality Act 2010) to pay due regard to equalities in eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people from different groups.

The protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

To assist us in complying with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 we asked the respondents to provide equalities monitoring data and explained that collecting this information will help us understand the needs of our different communities and that all the information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be stored securely in accordance with our responsibilities under data protection legislation (such as the General Data Protection Regulation or the Data Protection Act 2018).

Due to the low completion of these questions, it has not been possible to do any demographic analysis on the consultation findings. The sampling profile of those with protective characteristics can be found in Appendix 1 on pages 16-20.

3. Results in detail with full tables

3.1 Views on the priorities

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the priorities identified in the plan.

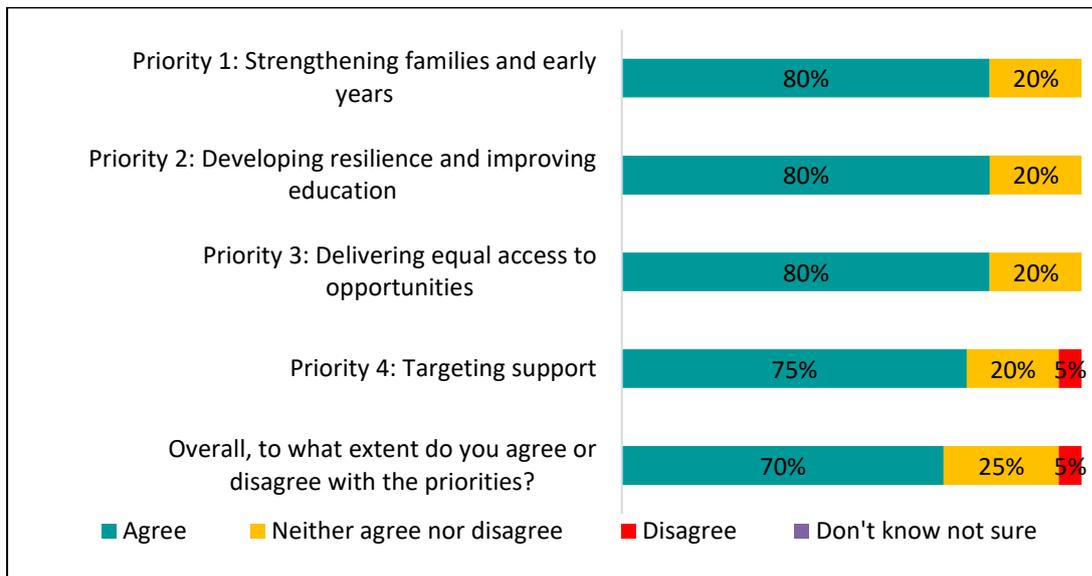
- The four priorities identified in the Life Chances Strategy are **Strengthening families and early years, Developing resilience and improving education, Delivering equal access to opportunities** and **Targeting support**



The chart below over the page that the majority of respondents agree with all the priorities identified in the strategy.

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Chart 1 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the priorities will help improve life chances for young people in the borough?



Respondents who disagreed were asked to give reasons why. Three respondents answered this question.

"I am not sure what your underlying philosophy behind "developing resilience" might be. That is a vague and confusing phrase. Does it mean toughening kids up by throwing them into fighting pits? It could mean that. It could mean anything."

"They do not match up to the voice of the child/young person"

"I hope this is not forging the way for mandatory vaccines under the guise of a survey"

Respondents were asked if there was anything else that we should consider in terms of the priorities. 53% (9 out of 17 respondents) answered this question. The suggestions were

"Improving the deprived areas of Barnet by way of more early years support, ending the need for Food Banks, more low-cost housing at realistic cost for those on low incomes, improving the environment with targeted efforts to reduce pollution especially near schools, good quality housing and care for the disabled, good quality social care for those that need it."

"There wasn't anything about financial education for either children or Vulnerable families. The financial literacy in England is awful and it could so easily be solved by teaching children about finances in school and having classes for vulnerable people"

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“Education improvement doesn’t mean more tests and higher grades. It means providing for every child regardless of ability or SEN AND making sure said child is happy in their educational setting”

“More support for special needs and families in benefits free computers for all children on free school meals”

“The data taken from surveying the relevant group of individuals and actually implementing strategies accordingly. Innovative ways of engaging young people. Cutting out the 'paperwork' and discussions and putting theory into practice.”

“youth centres to be open now. children are still gathering in the street/estates”

“More catching up for secondary school pupils”

“People should have a choice whether they get vaccinated”

“early intervention when problems arise - at the moment you can really only get help when crisis is reached and that is obviously too late and the damage (sometimes lasting) has been done”

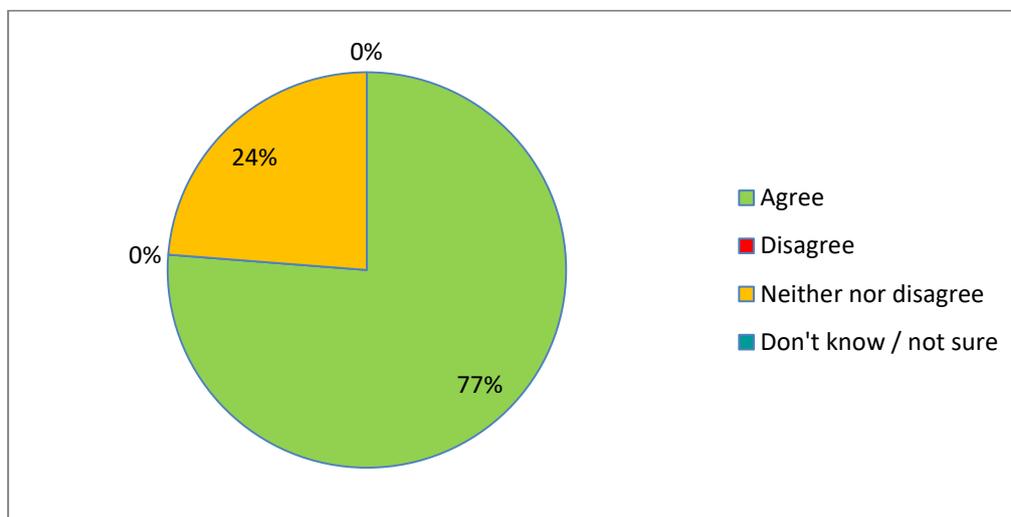
3.2 Views on the actions

3.2.1 Priority 1: Strengthening families and early years

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the actions under Priority 1: Strengthening families and early years

The chart below show just over three quarters of respondents (77%, 13 out of 17 respondents) agreed with the actions, no one disagreed, and 24% (4 out of 17) say that they neither agree nor disagree.

Chart 2 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions we have identified under Priority 1: Strengthening families and early years?



When asked were there any actions we should include there were a variety of comments were received with common themes outline below:

Support to children and young people and families:

“Is there anything to help decrease loneliness? Specifically for single parents and especially in a pandemic!”

“Improve the service level offered by home visitors.”

“mentoring/coaching/buddy system from YP who have been through similar situations”

““Families where the children may need extra support, where their parents are abusive or toxic”

“Coaching training for YP to help other YP”

Other comments:

“the borough has these services, all I can see is rename and change of staff. what needs to happen is more awareness, newsletter, adverts in barnet times online and on paperwork. extra funding for services and staffing, especially counsellors”

“Let people choose if they want to be vaccinated”

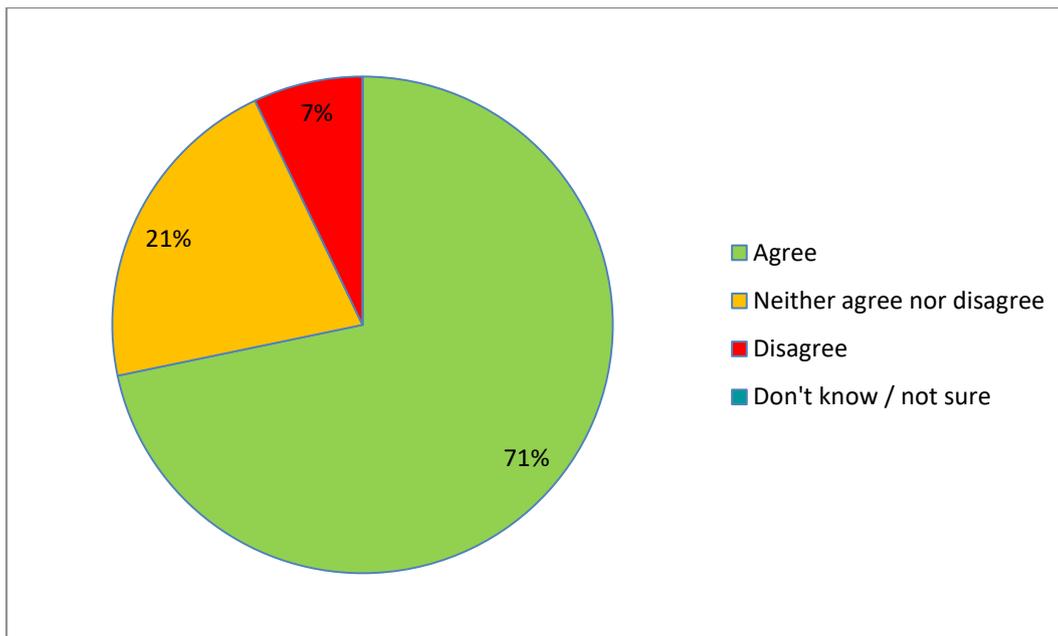
“Services for those families who have been bereaved during 2020. Not just bereaved because of Covid - include excess deaths and all deaths. It has been difficult for all people who have lost loved ones during this time.”

3.2.2 Priority 2: Developing resilience and improving education

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the actions under Priority 2: Developing resilience and improving education

71% (10 respondents out of 14) agreed with the actions, 7% (1 out of 14) disagreed, and 21% (3 out of 14) say that they neither agree nor disagree

Chart 3 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions we have identified under Priority 2: Developing resilience and improving education?



When asked were there any actions we should include, again, a range of comments were received. Common themes are outlined below.

Support with mental health and physical disabilities:

“Provide more support for the mental health of students, and more catch up for secondary school pupils, and security over exams”

“More funding for trained staff to support the complex needs of children with long-term medical conditions or disabilities so that they can be supported and kept safe in schools. This would prevent and help parents who are thinking of or already home-educating to keep children in school. It’s a huge problem, a lot of parents feel forced into Home Education.”

“need to improve further education options for children with SEND - limited options available especially for those unable to attend college”

“Schools need additional resource and support too - both to help SEND children progress when they need individual care and also in relation to teachers health as they are overwhelmed with additional responsibilities”

Other comments:

“If schools still have sets for maths etc then all of these priorities are worthless. Kids aren’t stupid, if you put an 11 year old in the lowest maths set you’re effectively telling them they’re bad at maths. How hard do you think they’ll try now? It is so so unfair to separate children on abilities as all it does is penalise the children with less support at home (which is most likely what contributed to their lower attainment in the first place!!). Please consider scrapping this backwards idea. Please read the book Mindset by Carol Dweck, its about not letting teachers only support kids to what they think their ability is. I think it should be mandatory reading for all teachers. Also, P.E. in schools is atrocious, I went to QE girls, we had so many sports facilities and how many did we use? None, we played bench ball. If people have a sport they can play they likely carry it into adulthood and it has so many benefits. If the school system encouraged more sports think of the knock on effect on pupil wellbeing and attainment.”

“Education should not be about attendance. An unhappy child can attend and do terribly at school while damaging their mental health. Education is about educating while maintaining a happy, mentally well child. Stress on attendance and ofsted results do not equal happy, learning children. Also, you do NOT need to discourage home education. For many children, this is the only way they can access education as the schools are extremely inadequate at providing for every child’s needs.”

“Keep students in mainstream schools not PRUs”

“Taking the pressure off teachers around the child's SEMH issue allowing them to focus on education. Involving non teaching staff to focus on personal issues.”

“Let people choose if they or there children should be vaccinated”

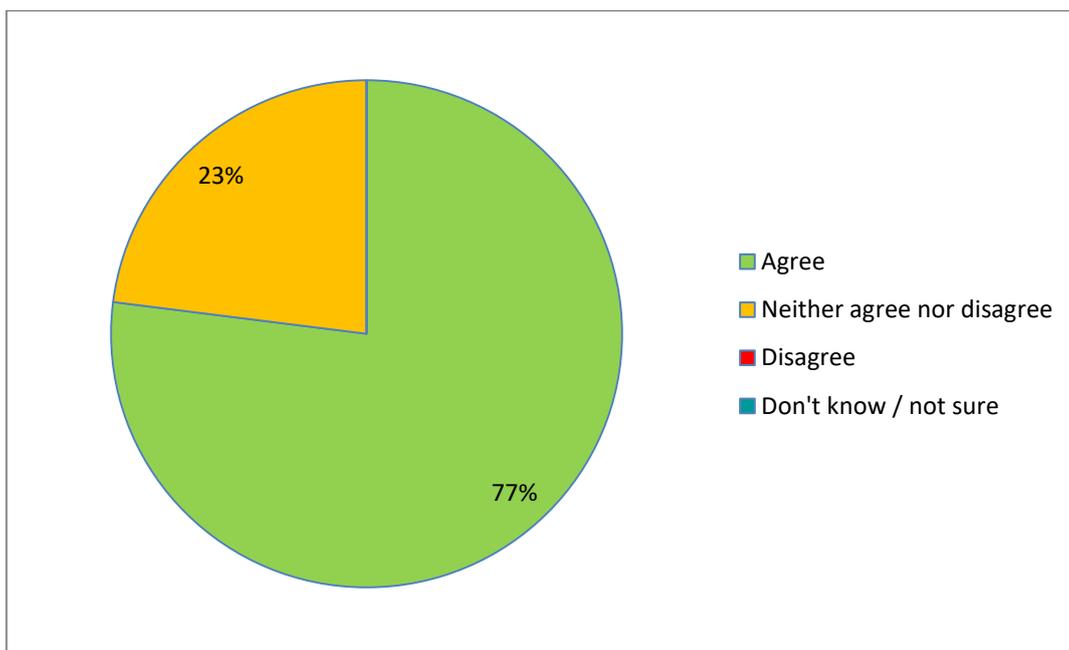
“Families who are vulnerable to COVID - not just the child - need support. It feels vulnerable families are being forced to send their children to school or rise fines and there is therefore a lot of anxiety at home”

3.2.3 Priority 3: Developing equal access to opportunities

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the actions under Priority 3: Developing equal access to opportunities

77% (10 respondents out of 13) agreed with the actions, no one disagreed, and 23% (3 out of 13) say that they neither agree nor disagree

Chart 4 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions we have identified under Priority 3: Delivering equal access to opportunities?



Asked if there were any actions we should include, a variety of comments were received and common themes outlined below:

Support for young people with SEND and mental health issues:

“Support for siblings from special needs families some social provision for special needs that is local Finchley”

“Ensure that schools use their SEND budget appropriately.”

“Consider children with mental health issues, whether or not they are in CAMHS”

“Consider alternative provision for children with SEMH - existing schools are not able to do this.”

Other comments:

“new opportunities for further education for those with complex needs are required work with families whose children are not attending school and don't threaten fines UNLESS sure it is not related to additional needs and lack of support”

“There are lots of people I know who would love to volunteer but don't know where to start, we have 400000 people in barnet, imagine if we harnessed all the energy of everyone who wanted to volunteer, it would be essentially free and the benefits would be enormous, it would also help create a sense of community “

“No to mandatory vaccines”

“increase availability of personal budgets - make it mandatory that they are discussed at annual reviews and not expect parents to raise it as many are unaware”

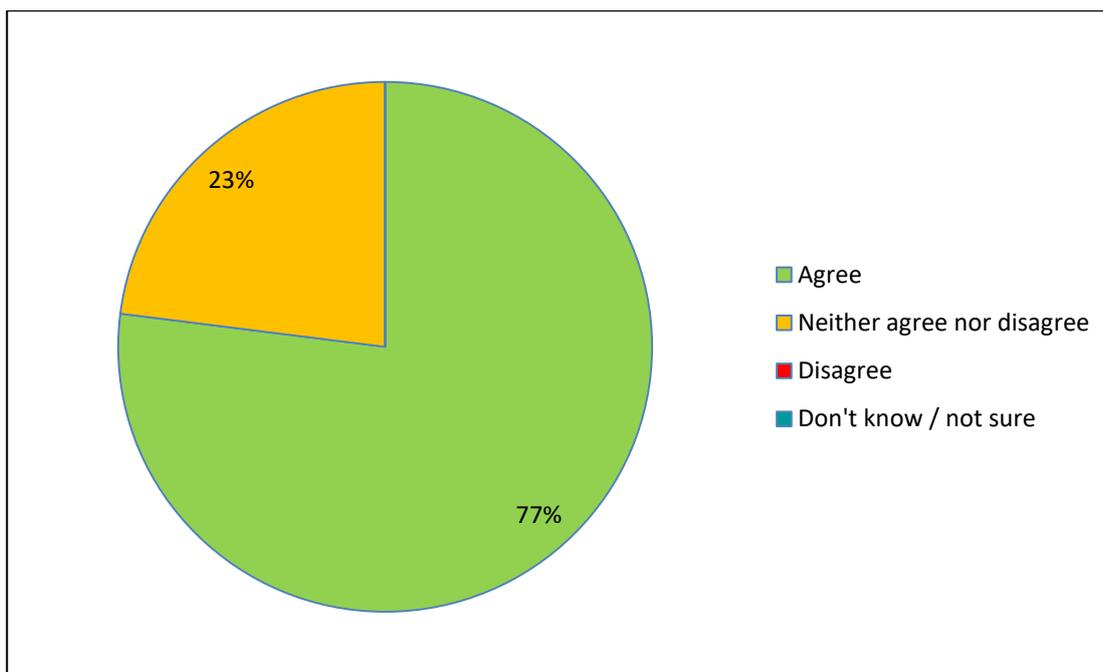
“Don't allow schools to encourage/suggest families home educate by saying it would be in best interest of child - this is not the answer - supporting the child in school is!”

3.2.3 Priority 4: Targeting support

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the actions under Priority 4: Targeting support

77% (10 respondents out of 13) agreed with the actions, no one disagreed or were not sure, and 23% (3 out of 13) say that they neither agree nor disagree

Chart 5 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions we have identified under Priority 4: Targeting support?



Asked were there any actions we should include, the main comments related to support for children with mental issues, SEND and vulnerable families.

Support for vulnerable children and young people:

“Consider how most children with mental health issues go unknown, by parents/carers, teachers and CAMHS”

“How are you going to identify at risk or vulnerable families.”

“More financial support for families with special needs”

“allocate a caseworker to family at early stage who can work with them throughout. current SEN caseworkers are overloaded and deal with admin only - they don't seem able to really offer much in the way of practical help and suggestions”

Other comments:

“Again if you had like a sort of tinder App (hear me out!) Which matched volunteers which opportunities in Barnet. At the moment there are volunteering opportunities but people don't know about them so everyone is missing out!”

“Decrease / discourage time used by professionals spent in meetings and give that time in some form to the child/young person. Have a suitable point of contact who can feed directly back to professionals on areas where support is required.”

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Appendix A – Sample profile on protected characteristics

In which age group do you fall?	No.	%
16-17	1	9.09%
18-24	1	9.09%
25-34	0	0.00%
35-44	4	36.36%
45-54	4	36.36%
55-64	0	0.00%
65-74	1	9.09%
75+	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Total	11	
Skipped	10	
Are you: (Please tick one option only?)	No.	%
Female	10	90.91%
Male	1	9.09%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
If you prefer to use your own term please provide it here	0	0.00%
Total	11	
Skipped	10	

Are you pregnant?	No.	%
Yes	0	0.00%
No	10	100.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Total	10	
Skipped	11	
Are you on maternity leave?	No.	%
Yes	0	0.00%
No	10	100.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%%
Total	10	
Skipped	11	

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Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were registered at birth?	No.	%
Yes, it's the same	11	100.00%
No, it's different	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Total	11	
Skipped	10	

What is your religion or belief?	No.	%	Barnet population %
Baha'i	0	0.00%	
Buddhist	0	0.00%	
Christian	2	18.18%	
Hindu	0	0.00%	
Humanist	0	0.00%	
Jain	1	9.09%	
Jewish	4	36.36%	
Muslim	0	0.00%	
Sikh	0	0.00%	
No religion	3	27.27%	
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%	
Other Faith	1	9.09%	
Total	11	100%	N/A
Skipped	10		

What is your sexual orientation?	No.	%
Heterosexual	0	0.00%
Gay or Lesbian	1	9.09%
Bisexual	9	81.82%
Prefer not to say	1	9.09%
Total	11	100%
Skipped	10	

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What is your marital status?	No.	%
Single	6	54.55%
Co-habiting	1	9.09%
Married	3	27.27%
Divorced	0	0.00%
Widowed	1	9.09%
In same sex civil partnership	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Total	11	100%
Skipped	10	

Do you consider that you have a disability as described above?	No.	%
Yes	2	18.18%
No	9	81.82%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Total	11	100%
Skipped	10	

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Please select the definition that best describes your disability?	No.
Hearing (such as deaf, partially deaf, or hard of hearing)	0
Vision (such as blind or fractional/partial sight. Does not include people whose visual problems can be corrected by glasses/contact lenses)	0
Mobility (such as wheelchair user, artificial lower limb(s), walking aids, rheumatism, or arthritis)	0
Physical co-ordination (such as manual dexterity, muscular control, cerebral palsy)	0
Reduced physical capacity (such as inability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, debilitating pain and lack of strength, breath, energy or stamina, asthma, angina, or diabetes)	0
Learning difficulties (such as dyslexia)	0
Mental illness (substantial and lasting more than a year, such as severe depression or psychosis)	1
Other	2
Total	3
Skipped	18

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What is your ethnic origin?	No.	%
Asian – Bangladeshi	0	0.00%
Asian – Chinese	0	0.00%
Asian – Indian	1	9.09%
Asian – Pakistani	0	0.00%
Any other Asian background (please specify below)	0	0.00%
Black – African	0	0.00%
Black – British	0	0.00%
Black – Caribbean	0	0.00%
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background (please specify below)	0	0.00%
Mixed - White and Asian	0	0.00%
Mixed - White and Black African	0	0.00%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0	0.00%
Mixed - any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background (please specify below)	0	0.00%
White – British	7	63.64%
White - Greek / Greek Cypriot	1	9.09%
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.00%
White – Irish	0	0.00%
White - Turkish / Turkish Cypriot	0	0.00%
White - any other	1	9.09%
Other – Arab	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Any other ethnic group (please specify)	1	9.09%
Total	11	100%
Skipped	10	