

EY have been commissioned to co-design an evaluation approach for Barnet’s Debt and Wider Vulnerabilities Prevention Framework

London Borough of Barnet have set out an ambitious approach to tackling social, financial and health inequalities to drive up outcomes for residents across the Borough with the advent of a new Prevention Framework. The Framework contains a series of core objectives to:

- To define clearly what prevention means in Barnet
- To embed a prevention focussed culture at Barnet
- To achieve recognition that all services have a part to play implementing this framework and commitment towards delivering this
- To support and contribute to the success of the Barnet Plan and underlying Priorities

It is vital that the impact of this strategy is monitored and evaluated; EY have been commissioned by Barnet to co-design an approach to evaluate the Debt and Wider Vulnerabilities strand of this framework. This approach will consist of defining a Theory of Change for this intervention, identifying its purpose and expected outcomes.

Whilst the objectives of evaluation are largely specific to Debt and Wider Vulnerabilities, the intention is the approach will replicable across other aspects of the Prevention Framework:

Objectives for the commission:



Objectives specific to Debt and Wider Vulnerabilities

- 1 Define the long-term financial, social and health outcomes anticipated from implementation of the Debt and Wider Vulnerabilities project.
- 2 Identify the outcomes of the new project; the specific changes expected externally alongside internal changes in staffing, capabilities and efficiency.
- 3 Clarify the likely required outputs and inputs from across the Council to underpin the success of the new intervention.
- 4 Detail the form of evidence, data and systems needed for evaluation.

Broader strategic objectives

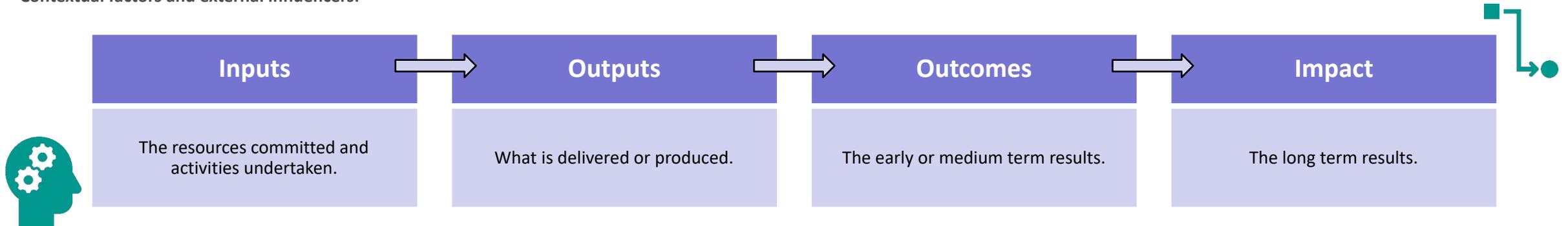
- 1 Providing an example Evaluation Framework that can be applied at the outset of other Prevention Framework interventions or investments, or further to other major policy or approaches across the Council
- 2 Engaging colleagues across the Insight & Intelligence Hub and Public Health in a collaborative manner to ensure the knowledge transfer is enduring and applicable in other scenarios.



Understanding the Theory of Change

The Theory of Change will support policy evaluation by providing an overview of the links between the activities and inputs, outputs and outcomes and impact of the proposed intervention to show how Barnet's debt policy will achieve key objectives.

Contextual factors and external influencers:



Building the Theory of Change:

- 1. Plan the process:** Identify the purpose of the Theory of Change.
- 2. Collect evidence of need and context:** Collect evidence to understand the issue that is being addressed.
- 3. Agree your intended impact:** This is the starting point of the Theory of Change. The impact statement should clearly describe the broad or long-term difference you want to see happen.
- 4. Articulate your long-term outcomes:** Work backwards from the impact statement to identify the 'necessary pre-conditions'.
- 5. Map your immediate outcomes backwards:** Plot the preceding stages in much greater detail.
- 6. Identify outputs:** Think about which products, services or facilities will help you to bring about the outcomes you have identified.
- 7. Classify assumptions:** Establish which conditions need to be in place for the theory to work.
- 8. Establish timelines and plan resources:** Identifying when you expect key activities and outputs to happen will help to manage stakeholder expectations.
- 9. Produce your diagram and narrative:** Displaying the Theory of Change in a useful format, such as a diagram or map, will increase its impact.
- 10. Utilise the Theory of Change and develop Evaluation Plan**



Case for Change: Linking debt and wider vulnerabilities

Key:

Drivers of debt

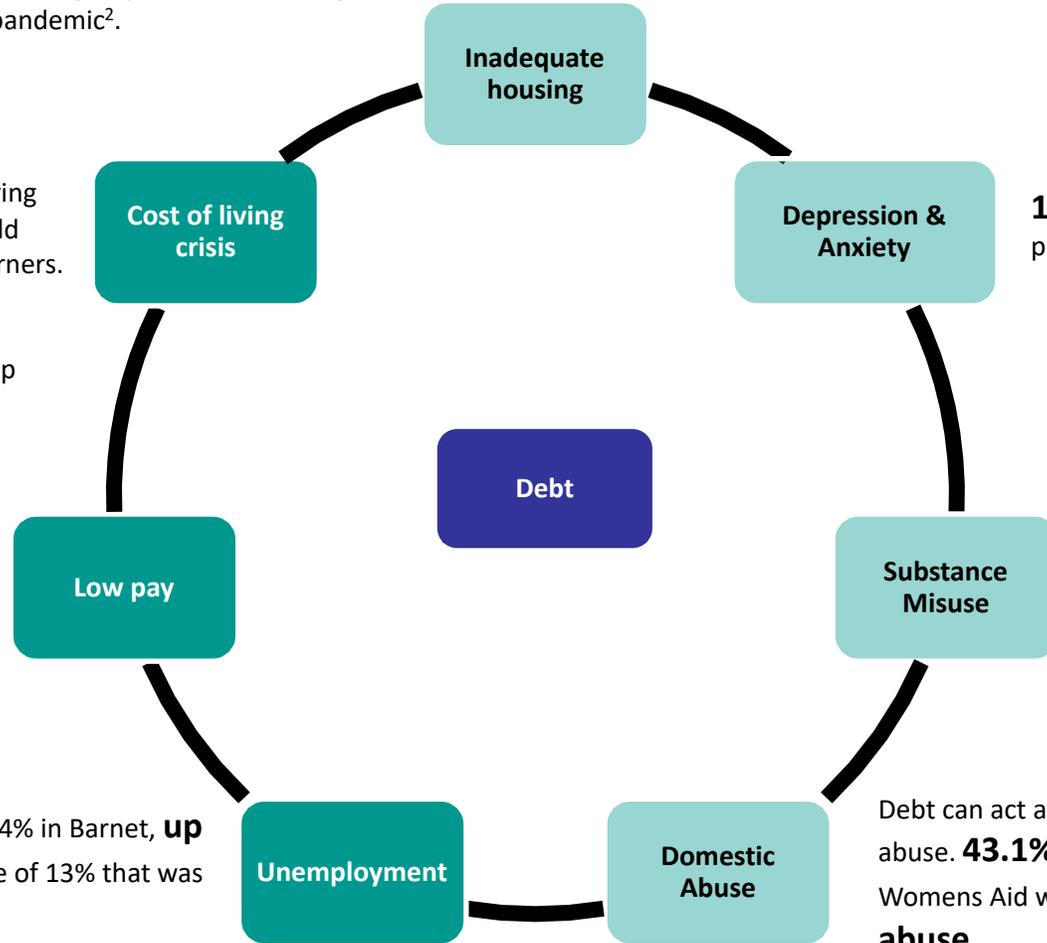
Consequences of debt

Savings levels fell for low income groups, but rose for high income groups during the pandemic².

The cost of living crisis is **disproportionately affecting low income groups**. Categories suffering the highest rate of inflation, such as food and household bills, comprise a higher proportion of spend for low earners. The bottom decile spend 7.1% of their budget on gas and electricity and 13.8% on food and non-alcoholic drinks compared to just 2.5% and 8.5% respectively for the top decile¹.

Affordability is an issue in Barnet; the ratio of median house price to gross annual earnings stands at 16.6, compared to 9.1 for England³.

In December 2021, unemployment hit 6.4% in Barnet, **up 42% from 2019**. This exceeds the rise of 13% that was experienced across London as a whole⁴.



1 in 2 adults⁷ with debt have a mental health problem.

There is a statistically **significant relationship between debt and problem drinking⁶**.

Debt can act as a barrier to escaping domestic abuse. **43.1% of survivors⁵** surveyed by Womens Aid were **in debt as a result of abuse**.

1. UK Gov (April 2022). Rising cost of living in the UK. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9428/CBP-9428.pdf>. 2. BoE (Nov 2020). How has Covid affected household savings?. <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/bank-overround/2020/how-has-covid-affected-household-savings>. 3. ONS (March 2022). House price to workplace-based earnings ratio. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>. 4. NOMIS. https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmo/la/1946157261/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx. 5. Womens Aid (2019). The Economics of Abuse. <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/financial-abuse/>. 6. Collins (2016). Associations between socioeconomic factors and alcohol outcomes. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4872618/pdf/arcr-38-1-83.pdf>. 7. Royal College of Psychiatrists. Debt and mental health. <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/debt-and-mental-health#:~:text=One%20in%20two%20adults%20with%20debts%20has%20a%20you%20feel%20guilty%2C%20depressed%20F%28%93%20or%20even%20hopeless>