

## Life Chances Action Plan 2020-2024

### Summary Highlight Report: November 2023

#### Priority 1: Strengthening families and early years

- *Adult Learning is available across the three Early Help hubs. Many of the training programmes are delivered in partnership with Barnet & Southgate College. ESOL has been identified as a key area to support progression with two of the three hubs focusing on this. In addition, Children's Centres within hubs signpost families to specialist support such as BOOST. Citizen Advice and Welfare Advisors also support families in this area.*  
**Impact:** *Evaluation demonstrates an increased level of confidence and skill set.*  
**Issue:** *Funding changes have had an impact on creche availability. There is a need to develop tracking of students to measure outcomes of those accessing training. This will be progressed through the development of the Early Help Strategy KPI's.*
- *Currently working on the implementation of the new extended early years entitlement. As part of this process, will be canvassing families, schools and early years providers. Working parties have been developed and regular updates are provided to key partners.*  
**Impact:** *More working families will be able to access the free entitlement once in place.*  
**Issue:** *Still awaiting confirmation of some elements of the new offer. Recruitment and retention of early years staff could potentially impact on the delivery of the extended early years entitlement.*
- *Termly accredited parenting programmes are delivered across the three localities. Through workforce development staff have accessed training. EPEC has empowered parents to lead on parenting programmes.*  
**Impact:** *42 parents completed a Parenting Programme last quarter. 15 women and 10 children completed the CODA programme. 42 parents completed a Parenting Programme last quarter. 15 women and 10 children completed the Children Overcoming Domestic Abuse (CODA) programme.*  
**Issue:** *A recent conference identified the benefits of offering virtual sessions particularly for those working parents. This is to be considered moving forward.*
- *All of the hubs distribute food bank vouchers as well as Healthy Start vitamins. The household support Fund is also distributed to Early Years settings and schools for those families on low income or identified as being in need.*  
**Impact:** *The Summer Household Support Fund, 18,217 children & young people and their families received financial support with the rise in cost of living. Over 4000 children attended our Summer BACE camps. As well as this, 600 food boxes and 900 snack bags were distributed.*

**Issue:** Where children are not in a school or setting, health colleagues have not been nominating families for Household Support Fund. We need to send out comms to ensure all families in need are reached.

- Solutions4Health, who deliver the Healthy Children Programme (HCP) via Health Visitors (HV) have had the contract since April 2022. They continue to deliver the mandated reviews which includes targeted at A/N and 6 - 8 week and Universal for others.  
**Impact:** Performance within timescales for the mandated reviews is low. LBB are assured that the contacts are taking place especially for NBV but not in a timely way due to capacity of HV. Safeguarding and vulnerable families are being prioritised and their service is being delivered.  
**Issues:** Challenges include the capacity and vacancy levels in HV remain an operational issue and S4H are actively and innovatively recruiting.
- Childhood immunisations remains a priority for NCL ICB and Public Health. A parent carer and GP engagement survey was developed and results of the surveys have led to a focused delivery plan of 4 work areas: 1) Communications and engagement, 2) Workforce, training and development, 3) Operational processes, 4) Data and Digital.  
**Impact:** As a result of the collaborative efforts across all workstreams, vaccinations across 1 year, 2 years and 5 years increased 4%, 2.6% and 2% respectively from April 22 to April 23.  
**Issue - Risk - Vaccine fatigue (from parents, providers and supporters)**  
**Impact and mitigation -** Not hearing the message or registering the risk of not vaccinating. Piggyback on other wider health and wellbeing initiatives that are important.
- Continued promotion of Healthy Start vouchers scheme to health professionals and early years staff who may come in to contact with eligible families. Also promotion of the extended vitamin scheme to the asylum seeker and refugee families across Barnet.  
**Impact:** Uptake figures for August 2023 were 52% this was an increase from July at 50%, but still below the London average for August at 57.9%. A healthy start toolkit has been developed by another borough and looking to adapt for Barnet professionals.  
**Issue:** Problems with NHSBA systems and still not all applicants can apply online depending on benefit received. Pressure to increase the amount of money offered is still ongoing as not increased with inflation and COL since 2013.
- The perinatal mental health pathway (PNMH) pathway is actively being used in the borough and also held as an exemplar for other councils via the family Hub networks. The Maple service has been expanded into Barnet from 2023 for Women who have had a child removed or lost a child.  
**Impact:** These services identified in the PNMH pathway help families and in particular women to identify and cope with PNMH / illness.  
**Issue:** Capacity in the NHS and partners is difficult in 2023 and may lead to parents waiting for a service for longer than wished.
- The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) service continues to offer face to face and virtual contacts to parents and students. All vulnerable families receive face to face with

*Universal being offered virtual. This is constantly being reviewed and evidence is being sought to inform this approach.*

**Impact:** *It would be ideal if there was enough staff to see everyone face to face in their homes. Realistically this is not possible and it is therefore imperative to seek a balance based on sound clinical judgement about who should receive what from the service.*

**Issue:** *Virtual contacts are often seen as inadequate to completely service the service users requirements. More research is required before this debate can be concluded. In the meantime it is being used to help limit service capacity issues impact on service delivery.*

## **Priority 2: Developing resilience and improving education**

- *126 of the 132 schools in Barnet (95.5%) are Good or Outstanding. 6 schools are Requiring Improvement and no schools are Inadequate. 4 schools await their first Ofsted inspection (Ark Pioneer, Hasmorean High Girls, Windmill Special School and Imperial College London Maths School)*
- *Attendance in Barnet schools in 2021/22 was 93.5%, not yet back to pre-pandemic levels but 1% above national. In 2018/19 primary attendance was 96.3% and secondary attendance 95.3%*

**Issue:** *National attendance rates not back to pre-pandemic levels due to a number of factors:*

  - 1. Hybrid working of parents means it is easier for children to stay home off school*
  - 2. Elective Home Education (EHE) rate went up dramatically in 2020/21 and has not yet returned to pre-pandemic numbers*
  - 3. SEMH needs have risen which has had an impact on attendance*
- *Barner Education & Learning Service (BELS) have worked closely with Family Services, Health and BICS to deliver support to children and young people with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties through training and support to schools and settings.*

**Impact:** *Attendance, behaviour and achievement.*

**Issue:** *SEMH needs have risen during and post Ofsted*
- *BELS School Improvement Team offer support and challenge to all LA maintained schools and monitor achievement and quality of education.*

**Impact:** *Achievement in Barnet improved in 2023 (compared to 2022) with achievement now getting back to pre-pandemic levels.*
- *Strengthened Elective Home Education (EHE) processes and capacity during the pandemic. EHE Policy is working well.*

**Impact:** *Rates of EHE have reduced over the last year.*

**Issue:** *Parents who don't wish to engage*
- *Continuing to 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. Since 2021 we have engaged with 15 Secondary schools and 1 college. From 2021 to 2022 we engaged 130 students*

*From 2022 to 2023 we engaged 140 students*

*From April 2023 to date engaged 133 students*

**Impact:** *97% the young people who engaged on the programme remained in education or moved into employment, training or further education.*

*The schools reported higher engagement levels for those who were struggling academically and improved behaviours.*

*An example - One student on the verge of dropping out of college (extremely poor attendance) went on not only to complete A 'Levels but is now studying Law at Cambridge.*

**Issues:** *At the beginning of the mentoring journey, an assessment is conducted to capture the challenges/barriers presented by each young person.*

*66% - poor attendance issues, low self-esteem, lacks motivation and low morale.*

*78% - academic issues, poor study habits and difficulty engaging*

*56% - behavioural issues*

- *Continue to promote pathways into Further and Higher Education within Barnet and the wider region/sub-regions, working with Education partners to ensure that courses are both attractive to young people and that they respond to future skills needs.*  
**Impact:** *The Association of Schools and College Leaders (ASCL) event was attended by 17 schools. The student and exhibitor evaluation forms were positive from the Barnet Options and Careers event, 96% of exhibitors found the event useful for their organisation. 23 schools from Barnet had students that attended the event.*  
**Issue:** *Access to London Academy Sixth Form vocational staff to discuss curriculum development.*
- *School Improvement Team continuing to work with schools on delivering best support and provision for disadvantaged pupils.*  
**Impact:** *Disadvantaged percentile ranking in 2023:*  
*EYFS - 17th*  
*Yr 1 Phonics - 26th*  
*KS1 RWM - 15th*  
*KS2 RWM - 13th*  
*KS4 Progress 8 - 10th*  
**Issues:** *- Capacity of School Improvement Team*
- *Virtual School extremely effective in working with schools and settings. We are awaiting the results from 2023.*  
**Issues:** *Attendance of LAC (particularly persistent absence) a big challenge*
- *SEN Teams and School Improvement Team work extremely effectively to ensure provision for children with SEND is strong in schools.*  
**Impact:** *SEN (EHCP and Support) percentile ranking in 2023:*  
*EYFS - 53rd*  
*Yr 1 Phonics - 25th*  
*KS1 RWM - 19th*  
*KS2 RWM - 17th*  
*KS4 Progress 8 - 11<sup>th</sup>*

**Issue:** Funding for SEND pupils can present a challenge for schools

- The Library service continues to deliver a comprehensive programme of learning and cultural activities for children. 2023 has seen the extension to all libraries of the Library Service's cultural events programme 'Creative Communities'. The 2023 Summer Reading Challenge saw an increased level of participation.

**Impact:** 3,108 participants in the 2023 Summer Reading Challenge, a 37% increase on 2022. 612 events and 17,626 attendances through the Creative Communities and regular library events programme to date in 2023.

- 82 schools are on the Resilient Schools network with continuing promotion of the programme and a planned offer to independent schools in west locality in 2023. All schools have been offered Youth Mental Health First and there are 226 Youth mental health first aiders trained across the borough from education and the voluntary sector. 14 secondary schools have been trained in WISE (suicide prevention) and remaining secondary schools to be trained in Phase 2 (2023).

**Impact:** Mental Health is talked about in school communities, reducing stigma and enabling pupils, parents and staff to know how and where to seek help if needed. Trained mental health first aiders have additional confidence and expertise to support and signpost those seeking help.

**Issue:** Lack of capacity and time in schools for focus on the whole school approach for mental health awareness. Changes in roles and responsibilities for mental health leads.

### **Priority 3: Delivering equal access to opportunities**

- We are in the process of setting up Autism Hub to support children and young people with autism before, during and post diagnosis. Working closely with Health, SEN and the Parent Carer forum.

**Impact:** Support will be provided to children and young people before during and post diagnosis. Children and young people will receive the right support at the right time and the right place. Support will be provided to young people discharged from acute mental hospital.

**Issue:** Need to find a venue for the overnight respite.

- Maintained the strong percentages for timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) completed in statutory timescale. There is an established EHCP auditing process to assess the quality of Plans undertaken on quarterly. For 2022/23, 12% of all new EHCPs have been audited. 74% of audited plans were graded "good" or "outstanding".

**Impact:** Timeliness of EHCPs has been maintained. Barnet ranks in the top 10% nationally for completing EHCPs within the statutory 20 week timescale. For 2022/23, 98% of EHCPs have been completed within 20 weeks.

**Issue:** Barnet's numbers of new Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) requests increased by 26.41% from 2021-2022 ; this is higher than the London (18.07%) and National (22.67%) rates and places increased pressure on the SEN team not only for compliance to the statutory timescales of newly issued EHCPs but also of annual reviews.

- *Delivery of the targeted healthy eating SMILE (School Meals for Learning Healthy Eating) project continues, alongside collaborating with the Healthy Weight Nurses. Signing up for school meals (including Free School Meals) are promoted as part of the project.*

**Impact:** *Schools that have taken part in the SMILE project have observed improvements in children's attitudes towards healthy food and increased uptake of fruit and vegetables and in some schools, school meals.*

**Issues:** *The understanding of the school food standards and the responsibility of schools in relation to delivery. The cost-of-living crisis putting pressure on food budgets and providing healthy food at school.*
- *In September 2022 we launched our traded service to schools to support children with SEND with work experience and work-related learning opportunities. In 2022/23 we delivered a work experience programme for 1 school with 2-year groups, and we supported two further schools with sourcing additional placements to bolster their range of employers. Since 2021, we have supported 377 young people with SEND or EHCP's in employment, apprenticeships, or Supported Internships.*

**Impact:** *Feedback from students and employers has been positive. All employers stated they strongly agreed / agreed they were prepared for the placement and were duly informed of all arrangements.*

**Issues -** *Blockages to young people with SEND moving into employment/ apprenticeship or supported internships include:*

  - *Parents concerned about Plans being ceased*
  - *Eligibility criteria – independent traveller*
  - *Eligibility Criteria – must have EHCP*
  - *Religious beliefs hinders work placement opportunities*
  - *Employment may affect benefits*
  - *Parents not wanting YP to work despite being informed at recruitment that wanting employment is a criteria and objective of the programme*
  - *Parents arranging holidays before the programme end making it difficult to arrange interviews*
- *The Open Space project has been running from May 2020 and offers families the chance to book a safe space where they can play together. This includes outdoor play areas and indoor space and has recently been extended to offer families free bookable sessions in an indoor swimming pool. All sessions are free and transport has been provided where needed. '*

**Impact:** *Over the last 12 months, 108 families have accessed the scheme. Feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive, with regular text messages, emails and photos received as a “thank you” from those using the space.*
- *Gateway is a platform that enables the uploading of reports and sharing of information across agencies and with parent carers. All of the teams in SEND and Inclusion who will use Gateway (EP Team; IAT; Autism team; BEAM; HI team; VI team; SEN Assessments and Placements Team) have received the training and are using Gateway to upload reports. Not rolled out to parent/carers yet.*

**Issue:** In order to roll out Gateway to schools and to parent/carers, we need to create a dedicated postholder, within the Data Team in BELS (cost £45,000). Currently no funding in BELS to create this post

#### **Priority 4: Targeting support**

- We continue to work with Young Barnet Foundation (YBF) to deliver our Holiday activity and Food scheme (Known locally as BACE). The Summer delivery was a huge success and we are now in the process of planning for Winter provision.  
**Impact:** Awaiting final numbers but we know that over 4000 children and young people accessed the summer provision.  
**Issue:** Sharing of data is time consuming as we have different systems. Often some of the smaller VCS organisations struggle to have the capacity to send what we need to the DfE
- Provided specialist employment and training support for young people aged 18 plus who are NEET or are unknowns in Barnet, targeting males particularly from White British and Black heritage who are overrepresented as not in work or education.  
**Impact:** Since 2022, over 70 young people have been placed in construction related employment through the Routes into Construction programme. Participants have undertaken CSCS training prior to employment. They have also received mentoring/coaching and job preparation.  
**Issue:** This programme is no longer being funded.
- Continue to engage care leavers through the Care Leaver Programme. Delivered accredited and enrichment programmes, provided advice and guidance, assigned four members of staff to work closely with the team at Woodhouse Road and provided personalised support to the young people. Partnerships built with organisations such as Pret, John Lewis, M&S, Wates and Selfridges.  
**Impact:** Since 2021 we have delivered the following courses:
  1. ESOL - delivered to the UASC cohort to enable them to adjust to a smoother transition in the UK
  2. ASDAN Moving On Programme - Money Management and Building a HomeTo date, of the 230 care leavers we engaged, 167 (73%) moved into employment, education or training.  
**Issues:** The challenges/barriers identified are: poor mental health, being stuck on benefits, long term unemployed, unwillingness to engage with the services, poor money management skills, housing - temporary accommodation, unable to secure jobs (excluded from the workforce), UASC - language barriers
- The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy was approved by Cabinet in July 2023. Working with partners across the Council on the implementation plan to take the strategy forwards over the next five years.  
**Impact:** We are working with partners to reduce the risk of families from becoming homeless, and the harms which homelessness cause. In the first two quarters of 2023/24 633 households were prevented from being homeless against an annual target of 950.

- The Barnet Group's employment, benefit advice, skills, and wellbeing project - Boost - will continue to help homeless families with income maximisation support, employment advice, and money and debt advice.*

**Impact:** Focus on increasing the supply of accommodation through delivering new council housing and enabling the delivery of other social housing across the borough, working to provide a range of suitable accommodation for different needs, including private rented sector, shared accommodation, supported housing, and domestic abuse refuges. In the first two quarters of 2023/24, 97 homes were purchased for use as affordable housing and 177 households were housed directly in the private rented sector.
- Mental Health and Support Teams (MHST) service review took place at end of 2023 academic year to ensure appropriate distribution on MHST offer with new schools coming on board.*

**Impact:** MHST practitioners in all schools working with a clear and consistent approach, dedicated link workers, case consultations, and termly meetings with Mental Health Leads. Schools have already reported feeling listened to and supported and train the trainer sessions have been well-attended.

**Issues:** The main blockage is the uncertainty around the MHST funding moving forward.
- The library service continues to promote use of the Reading Well Scheme. Libraries continue to host BICs sessions with young people. The Library Service has developed drop-in mental health information support sessions at Colindale and Chipping Barnet.*

**Impact:** 117 BICS sessions in libraries since the beginning of April 2023. 943 items in the Shelf Help collection (Teenage Reading Well) promoting positive mental health for young people. 3774 loans since January 2023 to date.
- Moving Forward has established two properties which offer transitional accommodation to care experienced adults; 68A Meadow Close has been repurposed as an internal semi-independent provision for young people 16 - 19; 22 Woodhouse Road has been developed as a bespoke accommodation pathway for former UASC young people.*

**Impact:** Young people are provided with opportunities to develop their independent living skills with the option of outreach support prior to moving into their own tenanted property through Barnet Homes.
- Children and young people with SEND going through transition are discussed at the transition tracking panel. Preparation for Adulthood start from year 9 (14 years onwards). Children and young people's needs, their aspirations are discussed at the transition tracking panel and this includes looking at their employment and leisure activities.*

**Impact:** Children and young people with Disabilities will have a smooth transition. There is a clear pathway for young people transitioning to Adults with Learning Disabilities and also for adults with Mental Health.

**Issue:** There is a waiting list for young people transitioning to Adult Mental Health. This has been raised with the Head of Service for Adults with Mental Health.
- Continuing to build on strong parental engagement to formalise our outreach function for families of young children with SEND, including those most isolated. Every young*



*person with an EHCP has a SEN caseworker - this person is the 'link' contact for families in relation to the EHCP.*

***Issue:*** *The increase in workload has meant that caseworkers are not able to engage families as well as we would like. In order to address this additional staffing is needed.*