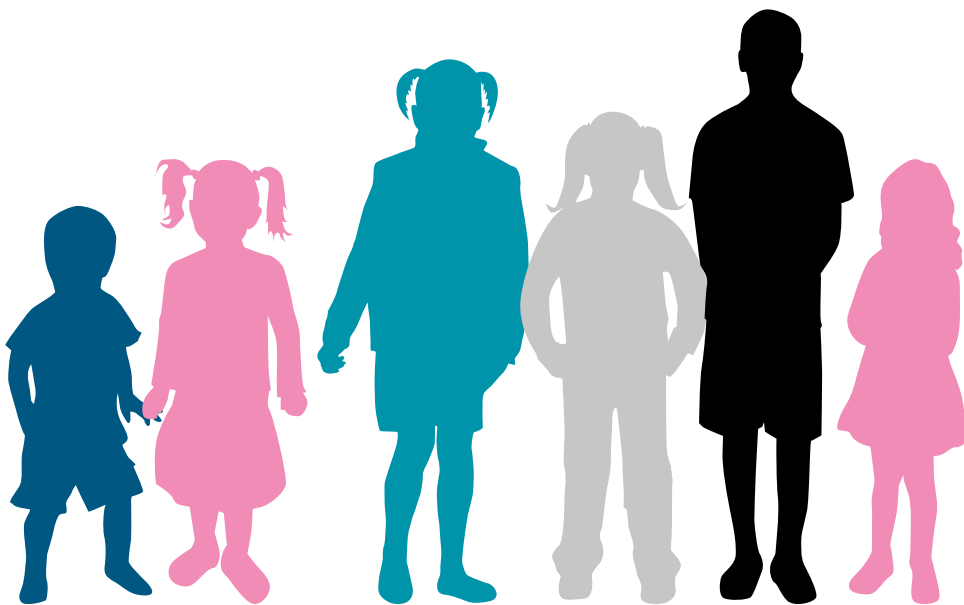


London Borough of Newham Early Help Strategy 2016 – 2018



Integrated
Neighbourhood
Teams

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This strategy sets out the approach for delivering an effective and integrated Early Help offer for children and families in Newham. It has been established in conjunction with Newham Safeguarding Children's Board and Newham's Children and Young People's Partnership Board. It locates the delivery of an efficient and cost effective early help offer within the context of Integrated Neighbourhood Working, and the necessity for partners to work together to deliver our shared vision.

This strategy replaces Newham's Early Help Strategy 2014-17, and should be read in conjunction with:

- LB Newham and Newham CCG Children and Young People's JSNA (2016)
- LB Newham Children and Young People's Plan 2015 - 2018
- LB Newham Early Help Practice Guidance (in development)
- LB Newham Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 2016-2017
- LB Newham Best for All Strategy (in development)
- LB Newham Parenting Strategy (in development)
- LB Newham Early Help Directory
- LB Newham Early Help Strategy Implementation Plan (in development)

2.0 Vision

Over 85,000 children live in Newham. Partners are committed to ensuring that every child in the borough grows up happy, healthy and safe, and receives an excellent education, which prepares them for the next stage in their life. We want to ensure that children and their families are able to access a coordinated early help offer as soon as a problem emerges, and that this offer is preventative, personalised and embedded within a whole family approach.

3.0 Context

Historically, too many children in Newham have been referred to statutory and specialist services via our Triage service who could have been better helped elsewhere. Our last Ofsted inspection in 2014 noted that children and families whose problems were at an early stage had too often been asked to participate in social work assessments that were not necessary. Further work could be done with partners to develop a comprehensive, well co-ordinated early help offer. Families were experiencing delays in receiving the right interventions for their situations.

The Newham Early Help strategy 2014-17 achieved progress towards embedding a more effective early help offer, for example through the Foundations for Learning programme, developments within Triage and Families First, and the strengthening of universal services such as the Best Start in Life 0-5 offer and early help within School Nursing and Health Visiting.

However, we believe that more can be done to improve our early help offer to ensure that all partners work together to prevent unnecessary assessments and repeat interventions.

We know that providing early help is far more effective in promoting the welfare of children, and keeping them safe, than reacting later when problems have become more entrenched. On this basis, all local agencies have a responsibility to identify children with additional needs, and provide effective support as soon as a problem emerges – in other words to provide early help. This will involve supporting families to develop the resilience, skills and behavioural changes to navigate the complexities and challenges of life, and to improve outcomes and overall health and wellbeing.

We want to ensure that children, particularly those with complex and multiple needs, can access coordinated early help as soon as needs are identified. Support can be provided for children of any age within a family context.

There will be times when needs may escalate, and under these circumstances, a higher level of support or statutory intervention will be required.

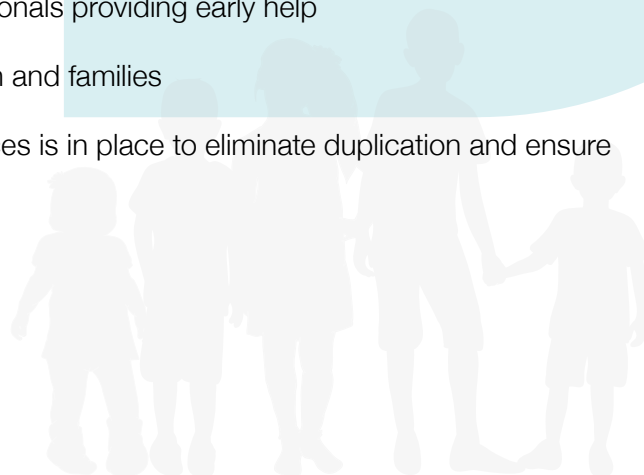
We have recently invested (with support from schools), in establishing a new Early Help Partnership team. The team will provide a valuable resource for partners in further embedding the integrated early help offer.

Getting our early help offer right will reduce the number of these referrals and improve outcomes overall for children and families in the borough.

4.0 Principles of Early Help

Our principles for delivering our early help offer are to work in partnership with universal, targeted, specialist and statutory services to ensure that:

- wherever safe and appropriate, families are supported to help themselves, promoting independence for families by empowering the community and building resilience
- local arrangements to provide early help to children and families are transparent, and there is improved coordination between practitioners in different services
- provision of early help is informed by the local evidence based profile of need
- arrangements are in place to identify children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm
- there is access to child protection and social work expertise for those professionals providing early help at the boundary of statutory social care
- there is effective training, support and guidance for professionals providing early help
 - there is a clear early help offer to children and families
 - evidence-based commissioning of services is in place to eliminate duplication and ensure best value for money.



5.0 Objectives of our Early Help Strategy

Through implementing our Early Help Strategy, we want to ensure that we:

- provide clear guidance around Pathways to Help and Support, which are understood by all practitioners working with children and families.
- build sustainable expertise in delivering early help in universal services and a sustainable early help offer.
- deliver more prevention and early help in universal services (for example, through children's centres, childcare providers, education settings, health).
- support more children through dedicated early help functions in the borough in addition to universal services, (for example through Families First, Headstart, counselling and parenting courses).
- ensure that all practitioners have a shared vision and skills set, which puts the family at the centre of finding and developing solutions (for example through access to training and practitioner networks).
- support families to build resilience and help themselves, including supporting parents to access education and work.
- get it right first time for more children, young people and families, through early identification, prevention and robust interventions at every level of need.
- ensure seamless working across all agencies, disciplines and levels of need, through our approach to Integrated Neighbourhood Working, so that we improve the journeys of children and families through services in the borough
- ensure effective evidence-based commissioning of services, which makes best use of resources and deliver excellent value for money.

6.0 Outcomes

The Early Help Strategy will contribute towards delivering measurable improvements borough-wide in the following areas:

- Identifying the needs of children early and within a reasonable timeframe by measuring and aiming to reduce the number of contacts to Triage from Schools which do not meet the threshold for Level 3 or 4 intervention, and by measuring the numbers of children discussed at TAS meetings.
- Reducing repeat referrals and plans by measuring the percentage of repeat referrals and repeat plans.
- Increasing the number of children who are supported through early help in both our universal and our targeted services, by measuring and analysing Section 11 reports returned, early help caseload data from INW services, and the Early Help Record data that we receive from practitioners.

- Improving uptake and effective use of the Early Help Record to support better outcomes for children, by measuring the Early Help Record data that we receive from practitioners.
- Reducing the number of children who are at risk of significant harm by measuring the number of children on a Child Protection plan and those on plans for more than 12 months.
- Reducing school exclusions by measuring the rate of fixed term exclusions for children who have received early help intervention.
- Improving school attendance by measuring % of children with an Early Help Record, or discussed at the TAS, who achieve improved attendance at the end of the early help intervention.
- Reducing offending behaviour by measuring the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system.
- Improving school readiness for children under five years old by measuring the uptake of free 2, 3, 4 year old places and the attendance at Children's Centres.
- Improving educational attainment, skills and raising aspirations for children on Children in Need plans by measuring attainment levels for these children.
- Increasing the number of people helped into employment by measuring the number of people helped by Families First Jobseeker workers.
- Reducing the number of first time entrants into social care by measuring the rate of initial assessments per 10,000.

In addition, there will be scope for early help objectives to be set at a local level, based on needs and data analysis in each Neighbourhood, to ensure that early help can be sufficiently targeted and tailored to improve outcomes for local populations.

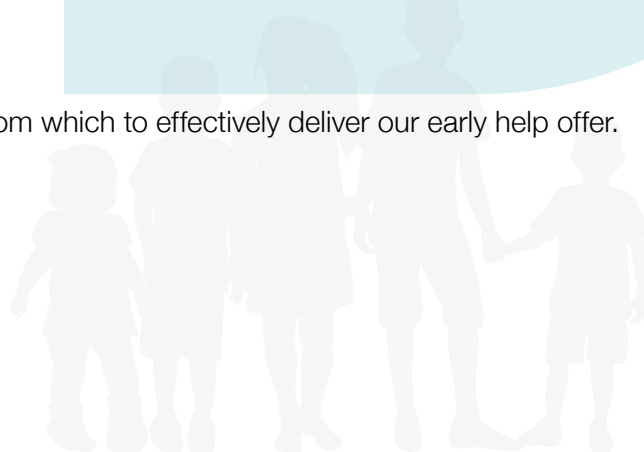
A multi-agency Early Help Strategy Implementation Plan will be developed in early 2017, in conjunction with partners, to set out formal actions, timescales and responsibilities for achieving our early help objectives at both borough and neighbourhood levels.

7.0 Governance

Implementation of the Early Help Strategy is taking place through an Early Help and Integrated Neighbourhood Working Programme Group. The Group operates as the Early Help sub-group of Newham's Safeguarding Children's Board. There is a reporting line into the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.

8.0 Where are we now?

We have established strong foundations from which to effectively deliver our early help offer. These include:



8.1 Integrated Neighbourhood Working

We have introduced Integrated Neighbourhood Working (INW) in Newham.

This brings together the Early Help Partnership Team, Families First, 0-19 Health, safeguarding and specialist services into four Neighbourhood areas:

- **West:** Stratford, West Ham and Forest Gate
- **East:** Manor Park and Green Street
- **Central:** Plaistow and East Ham
- **South:** Canning Town, Custom House, Beckton & Royal Docks

INW places teams at the centre of communities so that they can identify and understand local need and respond to it effectively in a joined up way.

The four integrated neighbourhood services will establish and maintain significantly closer working relationships with universal services in each of the areas. This includes: children's centres, educational settings, GPs and health centres, community health providers, police, housing, leisure and voluntary and community organisations. Alignment of community-based early help delivery to the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams will be enhanced by the Neighbourhood Action Meetings (NAM), Team Around the School (TAS) meetings, and the functions of the Early Help Partnership team.

This will improve relationships and trust between professionals, reduce duplication and enhance seamless working across all agencies, disciplines and levels of need to improve the journey of children and families through services in the borough.

There will be a focus upon sharing resources to deliver the right help at the right time, build family and community resilience, and improve outcomes for children and families.

8.1.1 Benefits of Integrated Neighbourhood Working for Children and Families

Under INW, children and families will:

- have quicker and easier ways to build relationships with professionals in their areas, including a Lead Practitioner who will work with them on an individual basis to improve outcomes
- be able to consent for important information about their strengths, needs and desired outcomes to be shared more easily between levels of service, so that children and families only need to tell their story once
- receive timely early help that is tailored to fit their strengths and needs, and their case will be swiftly allocated to the right professional at the right time
- be able to access a range of services within a local neighbourhood hub, thus aiding easier access to help and support when this is required.

8.1.2 Benefits of Integrated Neighbourhood Working for Practitioners

- Increase understanding of local need at a neighbourhood level and develop innovative ways of addressing this.
- Develop professional relationships and trust across disciplines and services within the neighbourhood area, to support effective working with children and families.
- Establish better communication due to staff all being in one place.
- Share and develop approaches to direct work – including through multi-agency training.
- Deliver systemic, whole family, whole-neighbourhood ways of working to improve outcomes.
- Build a shared set of beliefs and practice and a shared learning culture across backgrounds and experience.
- Pool information to inform service planning and prioritisation and to inform onward commissioning.

8.1.3 Benefits of Integrated Neighbourhood Working for Overall Service Delivery

- More families will be prevented from reaching statutory or specialist involvement.
- Better case management and clearer systems to monitor current cases.
- Improved inter-agency communication to strengthen practitioner relationships that inform evidence-based decision making.
- Capacity to identify gaps and duplication and recognise where children have received repeated, ineffective or overlapping support and interventions from different services.

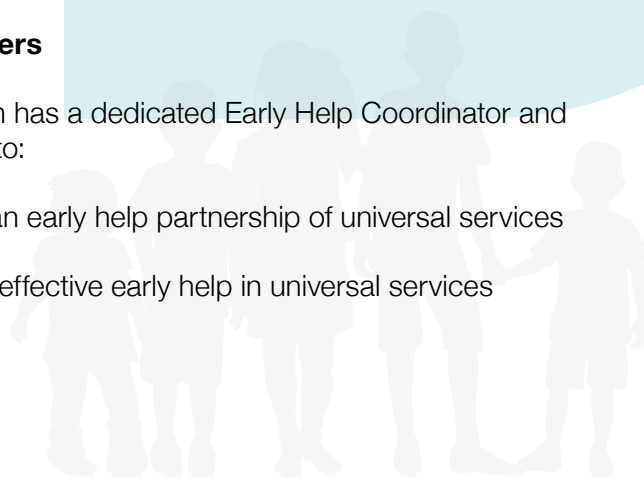
8.2 Integrated Health Offer

We are currently developing full integration of 0-19 Public Health services into our Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. We anticipate that we will become the first London borough to deliver 0-19 Public Health Services in-house within Children and Young People's services, with the School Health service transferring to the Council in February 2017 and the Health Visiting service transferring in July 2017. This will bring a number of benefits, including: establishing more joined up services, making resources go further, and improving children and families' experiences of health, care and support.

8.3 Early Help Partnership Coordinators and Practitioners

Each Integrated Neighbourhood Area team has a dedicated Early Help Coordinator and Practitioner. The purpose of these roles is to:

- provide leadership and coordination for an early help partnership of universal services
- coordinate and promote the provision of effective early help in universal services



- lead on embedding early help into Integrated Neighbourhood Working
- support practitioners to work with Newham’s revised Pathways to Help and Support guidance
- lead the development of methods that support universal services to develop and undertake early help functions, in order to meet the identified needs of families and increase positive outcomes for children and young people
- advise on Team around the Family (TAF) approaches
- develop a Single Practice Framework as part of Newham’s Early Help Practice Guidance
- support the embedding of Newham’s Early Help Record and Single Practice Framework through providing training, one-to-one advice and facilitation of Early help and Safeguarding Networks
- develop relationships across different services
- lead the development of TAS meetings across each neighbourhood area
- lead the development of NAMs in each neighbourhood area.

8.4 Neighbourhood Action Meetings (NAMs)

Central to the delivery of the Early Help Strategy is a programme of regular NAMs. At these meetings, early help cases are allocated to the right service, including circumstances where step down from targeted, statutory or specialist services is required. Cases will be evaluated for progress towards outcomes, and managers from integrated services will collectively determine the most effective response from available resources, including an appropriate practitioner to coordinate the ongoing plan or monitor activity to sustain positive changes.

NAMs will be attended by a range of professionals including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Early Help Partnership Coordinators | Youth Offending |
| Integrated Neighbourhood Service Managers | Safer Schools Officers |
| School Health | Adult Substance Misuse Officers Triage |
| Health Visitors | One Stop Shop |
| BSIL leads | Early Years |
| CME Officers | Workplace |
| CAMHS | The Police |
| Educational Psychology | |

NAMs provide a systematic method of increasing the volume of cases that can be addressed through a multi-agency early help approach, and reduce the number of cases that reach unnecessary statutory and/or specialist assessment. This approach provides better coordinated access to early help for families with children and young people with Special Education Needs, and Disabilities (SEND) who do not meet the threshold for an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan.

Not all the agencies listed will attend every meeting but there will be a single point of contact for each agency who can be consulted with in relation to cases presented to the NAM.

8.5 Team Around the School (TAS)

As part of our approach towards implementing INW, we are also implementing a TAS model.

Members of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams will meet with schools in the neighbourhood area on a regular basis. The meetings will provide an opportunity for a range of professionals to work collaboratively to:

- identify individual children who would benefit from early help (this will include children who have needs relating to behaviour, physical health, mental health, emotional wellbeing, issues at home, and support for children with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that do not meet the threshold for an Education, Health and Care Plan)
- review the effectiveness of multi-agency early help interventions
- identify children who would benefit from escalation from Level 1 to Level 2 (or above) as set out in our Continuum of Help and Support and Levels of Need guidance
- discuss cases (on a need to know basis) which are open to Children's Social Care at Level 3 or 4
- identify any gaps in provision and effectiveness of early help services, to inform future commissioning activity at neighbourhood or borough level
- support the delivery of multi-agency early help approaches in schools.

TAS meetings will usually be termly and carried out within individual schools. Rigorous use of data will support targeting of individual children and young people, and/or cohorts with a particular need or disadvantage.

Activities and interventions will be tracked and evaluated to evidence the shift towards prevention and Early Help.

It will be considered, following the pilot of the model with schools, whether the TAS could be adapted to work with early years settings such as Best Start in Life hubs.

8.6 Pathways to Help and Support and Levels of Need

We have recently reviewed our guidance on Pathways to Help and Support and Levels of Need, so that it aligns with the London Thresholds document: Continuum of Help and Support 2016.

Newham's Pathways to Help and Support is a tool for practitioners working with children and families. It provides a shared understanding and common language around needs and risks surrounding children and their families and how these needs and risks may best be addressed. Detailed information can be found in Newham's Early Help Practice Guidance (in development).

Pathways to Help and Support does not replace assessment, professional judgment or planning tools.

Needs do not remain constant, and the needs of a child or family will change over time.

Where a plan has been agreed, this should be reviewed regularly to consider whether sufficient progress has been made to meet the child's needs, as well as the level of risk faced by the child.

The Guidance acknowledges that professionals in all agencies who come into contact with children, or who work with adult parents/carers, or who gain knowledge about children through working with adults should be alert to:

- to potential indicators of abuse or neglect
- to the risks which individual abusers or potential abusers, may post to children
- to the impact on the child of any concerns of abuse or maltreatment
- to gather and analyse information as part of an assessment of the child's needs

8.7 Referral Pathways

We are developing clearer, more co-ordinated referral pathways and approaches to intervention for children and families accessing early help and statutory services. This will include work in the following areas:

- Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Children at risk of Sexual Exploitation
- Children Missing from Education
- Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Children and young people at risk of Not being in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), or who are at risk of exclusion
- Children and young people suffering neglect
- Families with No Recourse to Public Funds

Further information will be found in Newham's Early Help Practice Guidance (in development).

8.8 Step-down and Step-across

We have consulted on the Step-down Guidance produced in 2015 and have refreshed this to provide an updated framework for practitioners. The new document forms part of Newham's Early Help Practice Guidance and will be available in early 2017.

Step-down is the term used to describe a family's transition to an intervention at a lower level of need. This may be from a Level 3 or 4 intervention (for example social care Intervention or Assessment) to a Level 2 early help response (for example Families First), or from an early help response to a Universal Intervention when the level of need decreases.

When a family no longer requires support from social care and it has been agreed that their outstanding needs can be met through step-down to Level 2, there will be a planned response. A family plan will be discussed by the social worker with the lead agency and other partners involved, and with the family. Families, Early Help practitioners and Social Workers should be clear about what is happening and have the opportunity to consider what further support may be provided to the family concerned through Early Help. This approach is consistent with Newham's Early Help Framework, which aims to support all targeted and universal settings in their Early Help work with vulnerable children and families.

Step-down is important:

- **For the family** - in order that they work consistently with the same professionals to agree their plan and understand what part they play in making and sustaining

change. Upon step-down, the family will have a named Early Help practitioner who will be responsible for reviewing the Early Help Record family plan with other agencies involved. There will be clear and consistent communication from professionals regarding what is expected from the family if the sustained change does not occur.

- **For the Social Worker** - to ensure a smooth transition to colleagues in Universal Services when a family no longer requires support from social care but there are some outstanding needs remaining. Step-down will maximise the opportunity for continued support to the family in order that change can be sustained.
- **For the Early Help Practitioner** – in order that there is a consistent approach to sharing information with social care. This will enable a partnership approach to identifying the outstanding needs and the plan moving forward, which will maximise the chances of success in improving children's development and learning.

Step-across is the term used to describe a family's transition to an intervention at the same level of need but led by a different service. For example, a family working with Families First at Level 2 may step across to an intervention led by an Early Help Practitioner at a school. As for step-down, for a family to be ready for step-across there must be a co-ordinated response, including the transfer of their plan, a named Lead Professional, and consistent communication between professionals and the family.

8.9 Early Help Toolkit and Framework

As part of the Foundations for Learning programme in 2014-16 Newham implemented an Early Help Toolkit and Framework, which provides guidance to all practitioners delivering early help in the borough. Use of the Toolkit and Early Help Framework is supported through training and workforce development initiatives, including practitioner networks.

The Early Help Toolkit and Framework has been reviewed and will be replaced by updated guidance and templates for practitioners through 2017, as part of the Newham Early Help Guidance. The Framework will provide a common approach towards working with families and ensuring consistent practice.

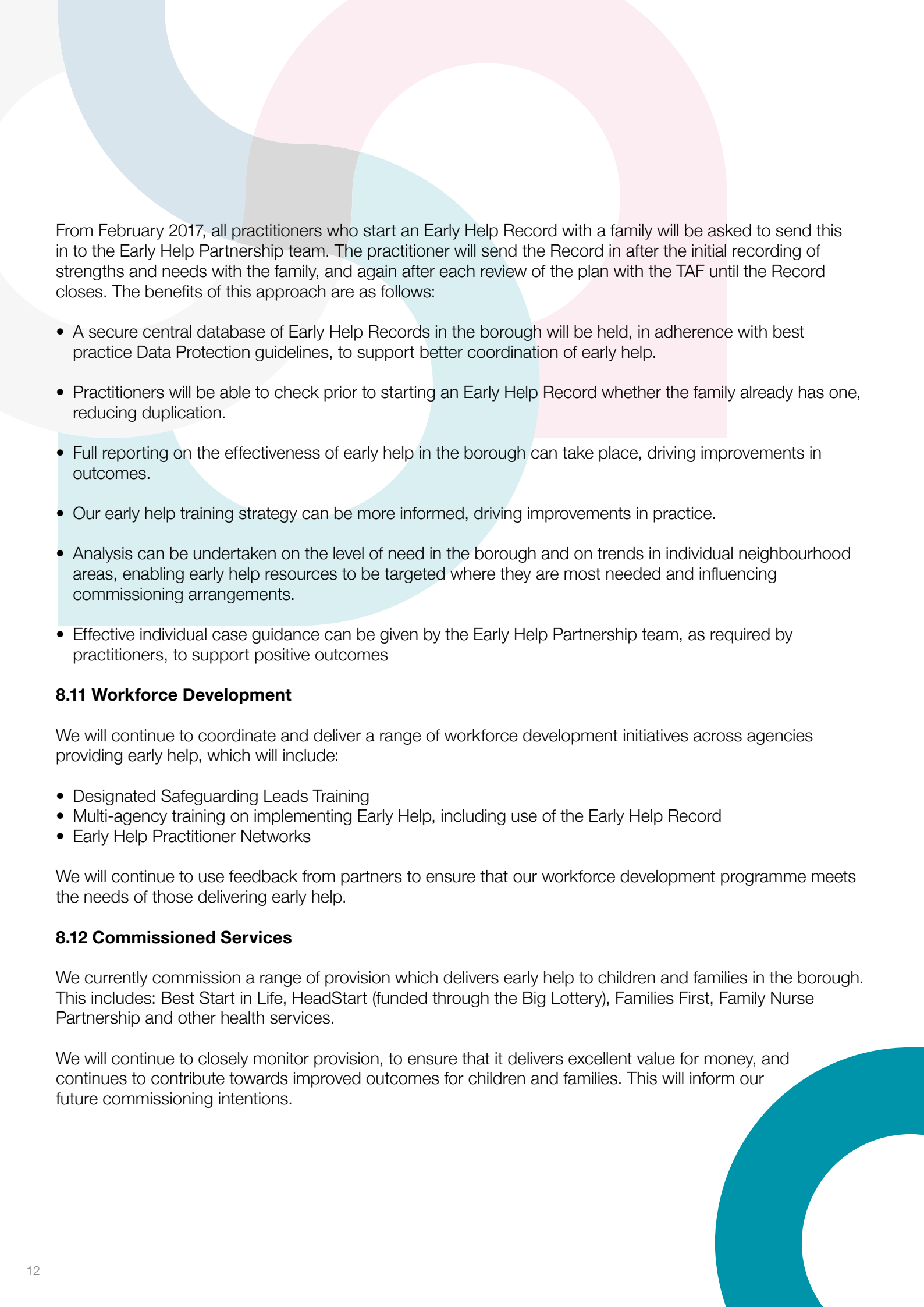
8.10 Early Help Record and Team Around the Family (TAF)

We have refreshed our Early Help Record to meet the requirements of practitioners, children and families in developing plans for early help within a multi-agency context.

Newham's Early Help Practice Guidance provides information on identifying a Lead Practitioner and operating TAF meetings to provide effective early help to the family and child. It also contains information on the ingredients for developing a good Early Help Record. Our expectation is that all partners delivering multi-agency early help will complete an Early Help Record. Also, that each family will only have one Plan.

From February 2017, practitioners who are considering starting an Early Help Record with a family will be able to consult with the Early Help Partnership team in the first instance, who will be able to confirm whether or not the family already has an Early Help Record open and the details of the Lead Professional, if applicable.





From February 2017, all practitioners who start an Early Help Record with a family will be asked to send this in to the Early Help Partnership team. The practitioner will send the Record in after the initial recording of strengths and needs with the family, and again after each review of the plan with the TAF until the Record closes. The benefits of this approach are as follows:

- A secure central database of Early Help Records in the borough will be held, in adherence with best practice Data Protection guidelines, to support better coordination of early help.
- Practitioners will be able to check prior to starting an Early Help Record whether the family already has one, reducing duplication.
- Full reporting on the effectiveness of early help in the borough can take place, driving improvements in outcomes.
- Our early help training strategy can be more informed, driving improvements in practice.
- Analysis can be undertaken on the level of need in the borough and on trends in individual neighbourhood areas, enabling early help resources to be targeted where they are most needed and influencing commissioning arrangements.
- Effective individual case guidance can be given by the Early Help Partnership team, as required by practitioners, to support positive outcomes

8.11 Workforce Development

We will continue to coordinate and deliver a range of workforce development initiatives across agencies providing early help, which will include:


- Designated Safeguarding Leads Training
- Multi-agency training on implementing Early Help, including use of the Early Help Record
- Early Help Practitioner Networks

We will continue to use feedback from partners to ensure that our workforce development programme meets the needs of those delivering early help.

8.12 Commissioned Services

We currently commission a range of provision which delivers early help to children and families in the borough. This includes: Best Start in Life, HeadStart (funded through the Big Lottery), Families First, Family Nurse Partnership and other health services.

We will continue to closely monitor provision, to ensure that it delivers excellent value for money, and continues to contribute towards improved outcomes for children and families. This will inform our future commissioning intentions.



9.0 Early Help Directory

An Early Help Directory has been produced to provide information on the range of services which deliver help and support to children and families in Newham. This will be a valuable resource for early help practitioners in their early help planning and intervention with families. It will also support our aim to provide families with the tools to help themselves, wherever safe and appropriate.

The Directory will be available online in early 2017.

9.1 Early Help Practice Guidance

We are developing Early Help Practice Guidance, for use by all early help practitioners in the borough. This will include clear information on processes, templates and practice, including:

- Single Practice Framework
- Pathways to Help and Support
- Referral Pathways and flow charts
- Early Help Record
- Roles of the Early Help Partnership Team
- TAF
- TAS
- NAM
- Information sharing
- Roles and responsibilities
- Step-down and step-across

Training and support on implementing the Early Help Practice Guidance will be provided by the Early Help Partnership Team.

We will consult on different elements of the Early Help Practice Guidance as they become available, with a view to publishing fully in early 2017.

9.2 Data, Outcomes and Information Sharing

We will be introducing a number of enhancements to our early help data and reporting systems throughout 2017.

We are developing processes to enable us to track all cases in early help, in order to be able to evaluate the impact of early help on the lives of children and young people and adjust our practice accordingly. This will include tracking the outcomes achieved through Early Help Records and the onward journeys of children and young people from the NAMs and the TAS.

We are also developing a dataset for ongoing evaluation of partnership performance, which will include the collation of data from all partners involved in early help delivery. Final content will be confirmed in early 2017.

We will provide a data report with analysis for Newham's Safeguarding Children's Board that evaluates the effectiveness of the early help offer and performance of partners. The data report will also consider the impact on the rate and number of referrals to social care.

Developments in IT systems will be fundamental to creating improved tracking and evaluation processes for multi-agency early help. We are working with the following partners to ensure that future systems for recording early help across the borough are coordinated and will facilitate the aims of this strategy:

- Azeus Care - designers of LBN's new social care client management system
- East London Foundation Trust – owners of Rio for 0-19 Health
- Safeguard – now implemented in the majority of Newham's schools
- LBN Data Warehouse

As part of this process we will be reviewing our data sharing protocols with all services involved in early help in the borough.

We will draw upon our improved early help data to inform our commissioning intentions with regard to early help.

We will also establish clearer lines of accountability in reporting on outcomes and use the extent to which outcomes are delivered to evaluate our approach.

9.3 Developing our approaches to consulting and co-producing services with children and families

We want to enhance our approach towards consulting and co-producing services with children and families. We will be working with children and families over 2017 to develop our practice in this area and ensure that the voice of our community helps to shape all strategical and operational transformation in early help.

9.4 Developing our early help offer for children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

An Inclusion Alliance of key stakeholders is currently developing a five year Best for All Strategy for SEND and Inclusion. The strategy will set out the actions needed to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, including academic achievement and preparation for adulthood. The Inclusion Alliance has identified that the SEND early help offer needs to be developed significantly to provide 'just enough help' to enable families to be resilient and avoid escalation to specialist services. We will draw upon the emerging strategy to inform the development of our early help offer, and co-ordinated whole-system pathways, for children with SEND.

This will be completed by early 2017.

NOTES





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