

NEWHAM'S EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2022-2025: SUPPORT IN YOUR COMMUNITY



WE ARE NEWHAM.

People at the Heart
of Everything We Do

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Our Priorities

- 1. Provide Access to Information, Advice and Support**
- 2. Address the Impact of Wider Determinants of Health**
- 3. Respond Early to Adolescent Safety and Context of Harm**
- 4. Develop a Targeted Offer for Young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**
- 5. Deliver Support and Interventions to Address Emotional Health and Wellbeing**
- 6. Promote Diversity and Inclusive Practice**
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Governance and Accountability

Foreword

From our Children & Young People's Plan

- Our ambition is for children, young people and families living in Newham to grow up happy, healthy and to be able to thrive and reach their full potential in all areas of life.
- We are committed to ensure every child and young person is safe, happy and cared for, and actively participates in positive activities to secure their long-term wellbeing.
- We will continue to listen to and co-design services with children, young people, parents and families to meet your needs.
- We are committed to realising the Young People's Charter, a set of principles on how young people would like to be supported in Newham.

About this Strategy

Our Early Help Strategy sets out our ambitions for a community and culture in Newham, which embeds integrated ways of working and use of resources more effectively to bring about positive changes for children, young people and families.

There are a lot of great opportunities in Newham. We are proud to have retained children's centres, reinvested into critical youth services and developed strong strategic partnerships with Police, Schools, Health Services, Voluntary Community & Faith Sector partners. Many children have the foundations to lead a positive life: a family that cares for them, a good education and a trusted community. It is this system of support that nurtures growth and enables positive outcomes.

Unfortunately for many, difficult circumstances do arise. With the right system of support, families can lean on their relationships and grow from their experience. Evidence tells us the importance a community offer is for our children, young people and families – and this is critical to our strategy.

The pandemic has shone a light on the difficulties many may face. Our families have experienced multi-faceted, complex challenges that cannot be attributed to one issue. As the nation recovers, the impact for many remains with many families plighted by the current cost-of-living crisis. It's important we remain flexible and responsive in our approach to support residents through social, economic and wellbeing challenges. In Newham we have seen inspiring examples of support from our communities – helping one another access food, supporting vaccinations and checking in on our vulnerable residents. The strength of our communities to support one another has never been better evidenced.

We recognise that needs change, and adverse outcomes do happen for some of our children, young people and families. It's important we champion a culture in Newham where it's okay to ask for help and that our help and support pathways for children & families empower this in our residents. We don't want to have a referral culture that scares residents away. Where families need more intensive support, our services are committed to working with compassion, curiosity, confidence, communication, clarity and in co-production and community with them and partners.

What do we mean by Early Help?

Early Help is the principle of providing the right support at the right time to tackle issues that emerge for children, young people and their families. It is about providing effective help as soon as difficulties emerge or supporting families to maintain positive change during the early years and throughout a child, young person or family's life. Intervening as early as possible, regardless of the age of the child or young person, can positively improve their outcomes.

'35 VCFS partners across Newham have seen around £6m of food support made available to thousands of Newham households over the last year'

Early Help is primarily delivered by services that are already known to families, helping them to access support to address needs such as:

- Housing, employment or financial support
- Parenting support
- Education and childcare
- Relationship support
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Substance and Addiction Support

'Early Help is a fully owned partnership approach to supporting children, young people and families in Newham'

Early help is often provided through universal services such as early years provision, schools, community health, Youth Empowerment Teams, voluntary services and Children's Centres. These services are often the first point of contact for families when they need help as they are already known to them. If necessary, families may receive additional support from local authority and commissioned services. In these circumstances, co-ordinated support will be provided to ensure that families are able to continue to live independently within a connected and supportive community network.

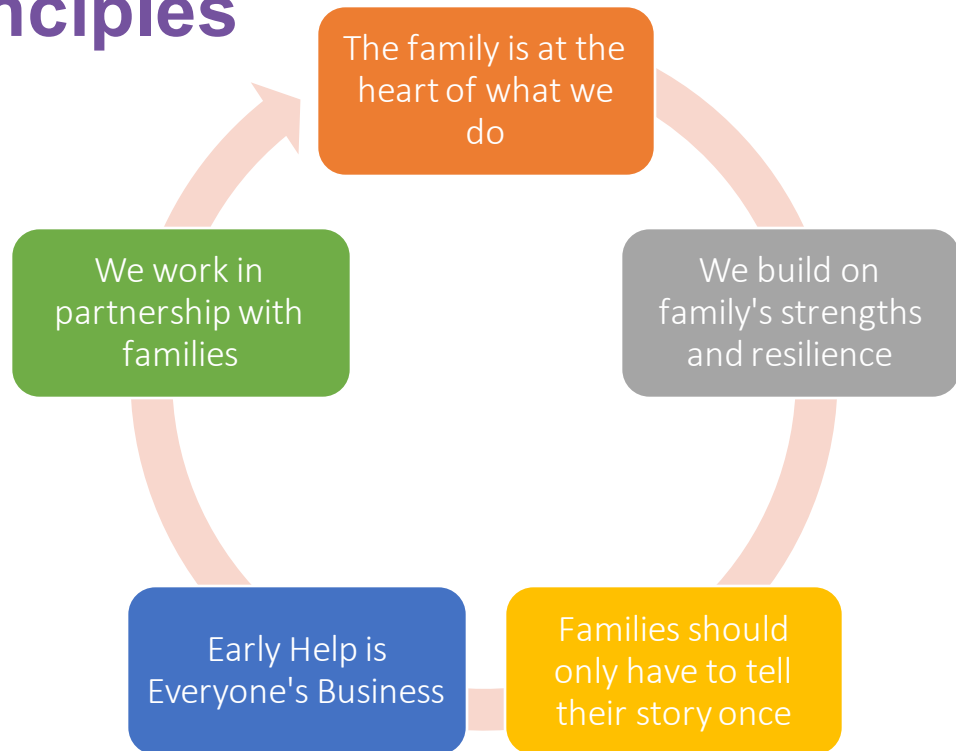
Early Help Work in Action: Children's Health and Community Libraries

During a recent delivery of school readiness project session with the Health Visitor, Nursery Nurse and neighbourhood library colleagues, a mother was observed with her two children (10weeks old & 1 year 8months old). Mother appeared fragile and in low mood which prompted professionals to approach her to uncover what was wrong. She shared that she was fleeing from domestic violence and abuse. She also had no Recourse to Public Funds and limited family connections in the UK. Mother went on to explain that she had been sofa surfing for the past 2 weeks. In response to this, the Health Visitor contacted Hestia DV Support Service and made a referral to Newham Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The professionals provided the family with access to food and stayed with her until she was provided accommodation by the Local Authority.

Our Vision

“Our vision is to **empower**, **encourage** and **promote** the resilience of children, young people and their families to seek their own solutions by helping them to access the right support from the right service at the right time.”

Our Principles



Early Help Work in Action: SHINE Sexual Health Support

Concerns raised by early help professionals and a local school regarding a young girl at risk of being sexually exploited by peers and adults led to a referral to Shine Sexual Health Services. The 13-year-old struggled with developing and maintaining friendships; understanding appropriate interactions and was on the assessment pathway for social communication needs and a possible diagnosis of autism. In addition to statutory intervention and support of Shine, practitioners were able to help significantly reduce the risk to the young person by developing awareness, understanding and resilience. The young girl was better able to recognise inappropriate behaviour and alert trusted adults of any risks.

Early Help Work in Action: Family Quotes

‘She [the EH Practitioner] was incredible, that is what I can say, she has good communication skills, listening skills, we felt valued and respected’.

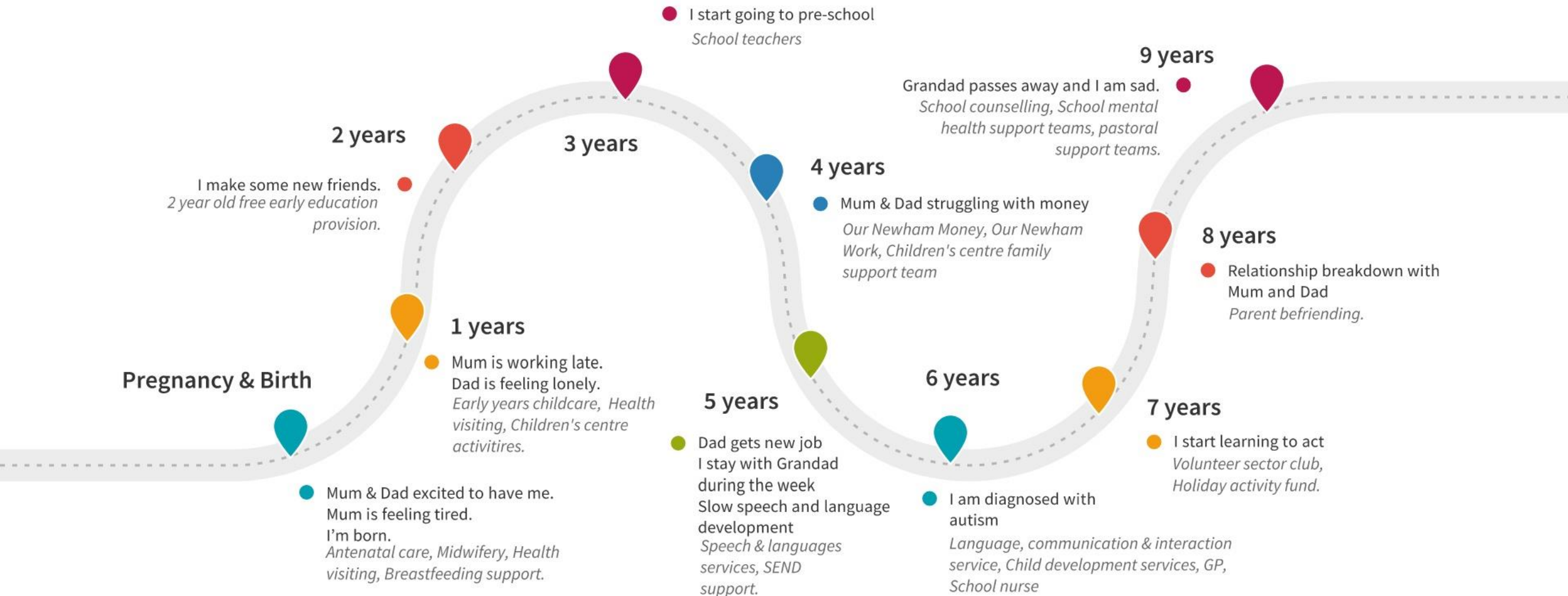
‘The Children’s Centre Family support worker was so helpful I don’t know what we would have done without her. She brought my children resources when we couldn’t go out and she contacted the council on our behalf so we could be moved to a safer neighbourhood. Thank you!’

‘We recently settled in UK. I had many problems, but the practitioner helped me so much and now all of my kids are going school and she also solved our other problems I am so glad to her’.

Early Help in Action

Journey of a Child

Early Help is not just delivered in one place – it is about a range of services across schools, health and voluntary and community sector supporting families to thrive. This page sets an (imaginary) example to demonstrate the breadth of services



Early Help in Action continued



Our Early Help Practice Model and Approach

Practice Model

Understand

- We listen and work alongside families to build on their strengths and understand their needs

Plan

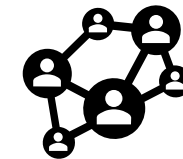
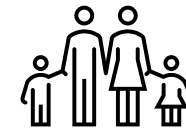
- We consider how we might support families to address their needs by working with services familiar to them and others that might be able to help within the community. This is written into a family plan.

Do

- We implement the actions agreed within the plan in a timely manner

Review

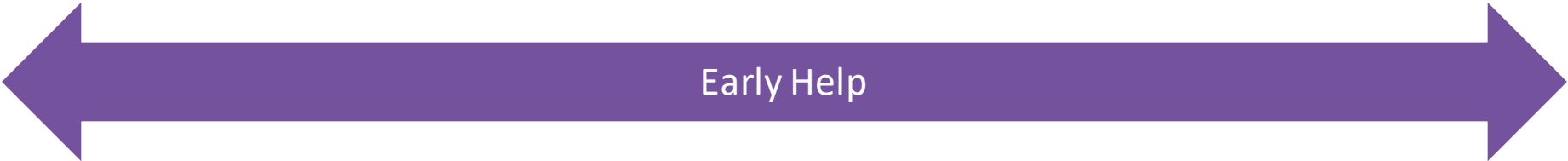
- We review the plan with the family, making any changes as necessary and consider whether progress has been made towards the family's outcomes.



Approach

- ☐ Trauma Informed – we are aware of the impact of trauma and will endeavour not to traumatise through our processes and structures
- ☐ Systemic – understanding the family as a system
- ☐ Restorative – restore relationships within the family and the community
- ☐ Strengths based – we will work alongside families as they know their needs and what will make a difference
- ☐ Relational – forming strong authentic working relationships
- ☐ Whole family Working - Including significant males, those not in the family home and adolescents
- ☐ Delivered by a well-trained, supported workforce. Driven by the support of a clinical team and delivered by one lead professional ensuring access to the right help at the right time

Cross Cutting Strategies and Agendas



This strategy is not a stand-alone document. It cuts cross many strategies, plans and agendas in Newham and its strategic vision is informed by children, young people and families and driven by the Council and local partners.

Children and Young People's Plan	Newham Young People's Charter	Adolescent Exploitation Strategy	Newham Partnership Health and Wellbeing/Growing Well	SEND and Inclusion Strategy
Community Wealth Building Strategy	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Digital Inclusion Agenda	Social Integration Strategy	We Are Newham Food Strategy
	Early Childhood Services Strategy	50 Steps Health & Wellbeing Strategy	Domestic Abuse Strategy	

What does Early Help Look Like in Newham?



Early Help isn't just delivered in one place. It takes place all throughout the life of our children, young people and families – and is happening in everything they do.

Local Context and Needs

Key Demographics

- Newham is a young borough with an ethnically diverse population. Newham has one of the youngest populations in England, with a median age of 32.3 years compared to 35.6 in London and 40.3 years in the UK
- 0–25-year-olds account for 37% of the Newham population. It is anticipated that this will increase by 18% by 2030.
- Newham has a diverse ethnic population, with a high proportion of Black African, Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi residents compared to London
- Over 200 different languages are spoken in Newham.
- Deprivation in Newham is high, with the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation score in 2019 showing Newham as the 3rd most deprived London borough overall.

SEND



Newham has comparatively high rates of Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Primary schools have the highest proportion of ASD children in England.



Health

- Around 4% of full-term babies are recorded to have low birth weight
- Neonatal deaths in the Asian Population is 6% above the Asian child population (excluding mixed ethnicity) in Newham.
- There are disparities in maternal mortality rates amongst women from different ethnic groups.
- The 8th highest borough for overweight Reception pupils (significantly higher than London) and the 2nd highest borough for overweight Year 6 pupils (significantly higher than London and England).



Education

- There is a wide range of good quality early education provision including 7 maintained nursery schools, nursery class provision within primary schools, 70+ private nurseries and over 100 childminders.
- Newham's attainment is at or above (often well above) the equivalent national outcomes

Families



- Many families in Newham are affected by poverty, unemployment and poor housing conditions
- Over 10,000 children and young people aged 25 and under living in temporary accommodation in Newham.
- Families present with the following needs - domestic abuse, socio-economic factors, support with a child or young person with an additional need or disability, mental health, low level neglect, parenting capacity or homelessness
- Domestic abuse is the highest presenting factor for referrals into Newham's MASH, approaching 3000 in 2019/20.
- Ranks as the second highest borough in terms of volume and rates of domestic abuse offences in London with 4,176 in the past 12 months. (MOPAC)
- In July 2020, we had 102,000 residents on furlough, or unemployment benefits – 35,000 more than our neighbours, Tower Hamlets and Hackney



Mental Health

- The prevalence of psychosis is higher in Newham than the average for East London, highlighting the importance of early intervention services.
- First Episode of Psychosis is 8-9 times higher in Black and Caribbean groups and 2-3 times higher in South Asian population.
- Increasing complexity and numbers of CAMHS referrals outstripping capacity

Youth Safety and Exploitation

- 59 young people aged between 13 and 18 were referred for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) between 2019 and 2020
- Newham has some of the highest levels of serious youth violence in London
- Disproportionately high number of young black males are reported to be at risk of child criminal exploitation



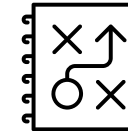
Local Context and Needs

Families told us that...



Access to Services

- Language can act as a barrier to accessing help and support
- Families find out about services through 'Word of mouth', community services and informal connections
- Families will approach a health professional first to access support
- They are not always clear about the pathways to help and support
- Fathers would like to be engaged more in family work



Co-Create Together

- Residents and families would like to work with us to improve and develop services
- They would welcome trained parents to support others to navigate the early help offer



Relationships

- They would like professionals to listen first to their story before responding
- They do not want to repeat their story to many professionals
- They would like to make meaningful connections with a helper and not be referred on without support



One Stop Shop

- They would like to go to one place to access support in their community
- Services should cover all ages from 0-25
- They would like access to face to face, online and digital support

Developing Our Priorities

Currently...

1

Newham has a strong and integrated early years offer. We know that families with **older children** often struggle to navigate our early help system and that this presents a further obstacle for those with English as a second language.

2

The stressors that families experience such as unemployment, homelessness or poverty have a detrimental impact on their health.

3

The contextual risks that adolescents face increases with age and continues into young adulthood.

4

Families face difficulties accessing the support they need early on when their child has additional needs.

5

Emotional health and wellbeing of the family is disrupted by several factors and can manifest at any developmental age or stage of life.

6

Newham is rich in diversity. 78% of residents are from Black, Asian and marginalised groups. Yet many face racism and discrimination. We know that for LGBTIQ+ people living in the borough, the service offer is limited.

7

Traditionally, men have been under-represented when families engage with us.

8

The impact of early childhood experiences and traumatic episodes can impact on children's development and ability to flourish.



We will...

Provide Easy access to information, advice and support to families across the age range.

Develop programmes and strengthen existing services that Address the impact of wider determinants of health

Respond early to adolescent safety and context of harm right up to the age of 25

Have a Targeted response to Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Invest in partnership pathways and embed the Thrive model to deliver support and interventions to address emotional health and wellbeing needs

Ensure Newham is an inclusive environment for all and provides a space that promotes and supports diversity whilst making clear and unequivocal commitment to taking on the challenge to eradicate racism and inequality.

Actively challenge gender stereotypes and ensure working with Fathers and Significant Males is integral to our approach.

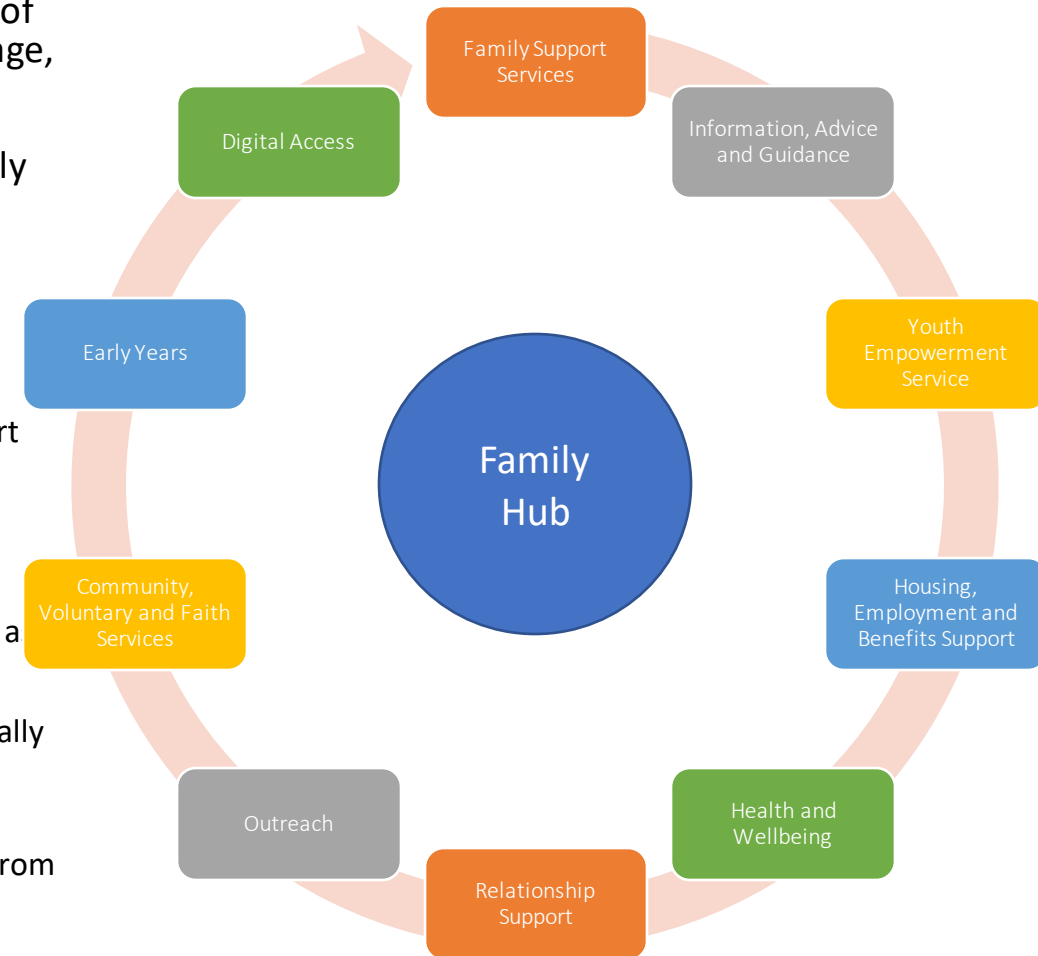
Respond to Adverse Childhood Experiences with a targeted focus on violence against women and girls

Young People's Charter - 'Support our independence'

Our ambition is to develop localised hubs embedded within our communities to serve as one-stop shop for families' needs, providing access to universal services and multidisciplinary teams under one roof. Building on the work of our Children's Centres and strengthening our offer right up to 25 years of age, we are determined to make it easier for families to access high quality information, advice and support within their neighbourhood via physical Family Hubs, a virtual/digital platform and through outreach work. Recently the Family Hub model has emerged nationally as an effective integrated model which is being encouraged by various policy initiatives.

What this means for us:

- ☐ Prototype a family hub in Newham by the end of 2022 and create a virtual support team which spans the whole borough.
- ☐ Establish a 0-19 (25) peripatetic family support outreach service and Strengthen provision/pathways for 5-19.
- ☐ Develop a parent-led Family Navigators programme to remove any barriers (such as language) that may exist for families to access support.
- ☐ Create a digital platform for those families that cannot access Family Hubs physically but require quick access to support online or via web chat.
- ☐ Redesign Family Information Service (FIS) online resource to ensure that free, impartial information and advice on the services for children and young people (from birth to 25 years old), parents and families is easily accessible to all.



Young People's Charter - 'Prioritise our health'

Our Early Help Strategy is responsive to the aims set out in 50 Steps to a Healthier Newham - our Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Newham, which outlines our ambition to become a healthier borough. This includes the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme.

What this means for us:

- ☐ Develop an all-age whole system approach to address unhealthy weight with our Healthy Weight Healthy Lives programme.
- ☐ Strengthen the support we provide in maternity services through our Maternity Working Group – with a core focus on engagement with parents & families, infant feeding, mental health & wellbeing family hubs.
- ☐ Maintain the Whole School Asthma Programme and strengthen the long-term condition management training for Schools
- ☐ Develop our Early Childhood Services Strategy.
- ☐ Building on our previous Strengthening Families offer, we will work to provide a seamless offer for housing, employment and financial advice and support for families
- ☐ Develop a multi-agency approach to engage early with families and children on housing estates who may need early help



Housing issues are commonly reported in patients referred to social prescribing, so the ability to explain this process and support patients throughout this process will be very useful.
Housing and Homelessness training attendee

Young People's Charter - 'Prioritise our safety'

Tackling exploitation and youth safety continues to be one of the most important challenges currently facing Newham. It is crucial that all partner agencies are equip to identify children and young people at risk of and affected by exploitation as early as possible to prevent harm.

What this means for us:

- ☐ Provide access to trusted adults and strengthen our workforce's response to exploitation so that we can act early to emerging levels of need and risk
- ☐ Embed the use of our Exploitation Screening Tool across early help to understand levels of risk
- ☐ Revise our Early Help Assessment to consider harm outside of the home environment
- ☐ Implement a whole family response that considers the younger siblings to prevent and reduce future harm or risk
- ☐ Support parent/carers to recognise the early signs and indicators of grooming and exploitation by providing access to evidenced-based parenting programmes
- ☐ Continue to engage young people and families in conversations about safety so that appropriate responses can be implemented
- ☐ Strengthen our transitional safeguarding response, referral pathway and offer for 18-25 year olds

Early Help in Action: A Transitional Safeguarding Multiagency Response

*R (12 years old) came to the attention of children's services following an attempted arson attack on the family's home. 24 hours following the attack, Police intelligence was shared and disseminated at the **Partnership Violence Assessment meeting**. R's maternal Uncle, P (18 years old) who resided at the family home was known to services due to county lines, criminal exploitation and missing episodes. R shortly became subject to a statutory assessment whilst intelligence was shared with **Adult Social Care** and a multiagency panel was held at the **Preventing Child Exploitation Harm Hub** to agree next steps in respect to P.*

A National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was completed and the family were immediately placed in temporary accommodation and then supported to move to a permanent property. A safety plan was agreed and the special schemes on the new property. R's learning was not disrupted as the school provided access to remote learning until he successfully transferred to a new school.

*With support from **St Giles, The Violence Reduction Co-ordinator** and **The Return Home Interview Team**, P was supported to access local support provisions in the new area.*

Young People's Charter - 'Support our independence'

Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities can often face a range of health, social and economic challenges throughout their lives which can impact significantly on them and their families. By providing effective early help from identification of needs through to preparation for adulthood, we can ensure children and young people with SEND are included and valued members of our Newham community, supported to thrive in our schools and settings.

What this means for us:

- ☐ Supporting the co-design of our local offer of services with children and young people with SEND and advocating for inclusive access across all our community services.
- ☐ Strengthening our parenting offer for parents and carers of children with SEND
- ☐ Improving our short breaks offer through creating a wider range of activities that children and young people can enjoy, from sports and leisure through to tailored youth activities for children with complex needs
- ☐ Develop our frontline practice in working with children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.
- ☐ Identify children's needs earlier by reducing delays in diagnosis/assessment and building the capacity and skills of our early years providers to support them
- ☐ Supporting young people to develop their independence skills in preparation for adulthood including further education and training.
- ☐ Provide young people access to support and information as part of robust transition planning at key phases and developmental points, enabling them to make informed decisions and have influence over their lives.



Young People's Charter - 'Prioritise our health'

There's an increasing need for mental health support in Newham, with the challenges our families face becoming more complex. It is critical that we embed preventative approaches to mental health in Newham and that children can access a range of services easily and without stigma.

What this means for us:

- ❑ Build on the Single Front door for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing project, ensuring that it is fully integrated within the early help system.
- ❑ Embed the Thrive model and trauma informed practice across Newham: our 'Thriving young minds' approach, perinatal and adults' mental health.
- ❑ Test new approaches to mental health for vulnerable and 'at risk' young people through our Vanguard, YourChoice and Safe programmes.
- ❑ Deliver the suicide and self-harm prevention plan.
- ❑ With the launch of the five new Community Integrated Mental health Services (CIMHS), the offer for adults will be enhanced with greater collaboration amongst NHS Mental Health, Primary Care, CVFS and peer support workers.

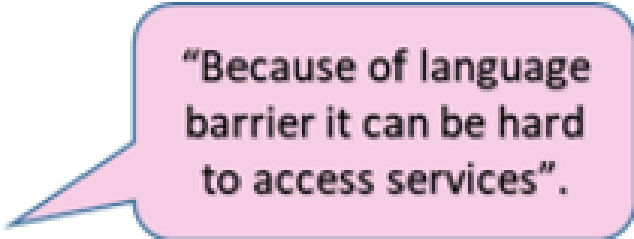


Young People's Charter - 'Celebrate Diversity'

Newham has a radical vision to build a better and brighter future. We are a diverse and aspirational place. We have made a clear and unequivocal commitment to taking on the challenge to eradicate racism and inequality in Newham through open, honest and authentic conversations at all levels in the organisation. As part of growing up, all children and young people will spend time exploring their identity and developing a sense of who they are. Sometimes people will face extra pressure and worries that lead them to feeling isolated. We want to be sure Newham is an inclusive environment for all and provides a space for children and young people to thrive.

What this means for us:

- ☐ Challenge racial stereotypes, bias and discrimination and adopt an anti-racist position in our work
- ☐ Ensure that services are reflective of young people's identities, providing a holistic approach to our practice.
- ☐ Ensure that services are inclusive and responsive to young people who are often marginalized such as Young Carers, Looked after Children, LGBTQ+, and SEND
- ☐ Develop a cultural practice in Newham that celebrates diversity and connects people to environments where they can thrive, linking in with community-based organisations.
- ☐ Ensure all frontline workers and community partners have the skills and confidence to support LGBTQI+ children within the family system reducing the need to refer out – except where a specialist provision is needed.
- ☐ We will ensure that our staff and partners work with a high degree of self-awareness by creating an atmosphere of open, honest authentic conversations and challenge, underpinned by culture competency training



"Because of language barrier it can be hard to access services".

Young People's Charter - 'Build relationships with us'

Traditionally, father figures and other significant men in families are under-represented when engaging with us. Our commitment to a whole family approach means working with all family members, including non-resident fathers and significant male role models in children's lives.

What this means for us:

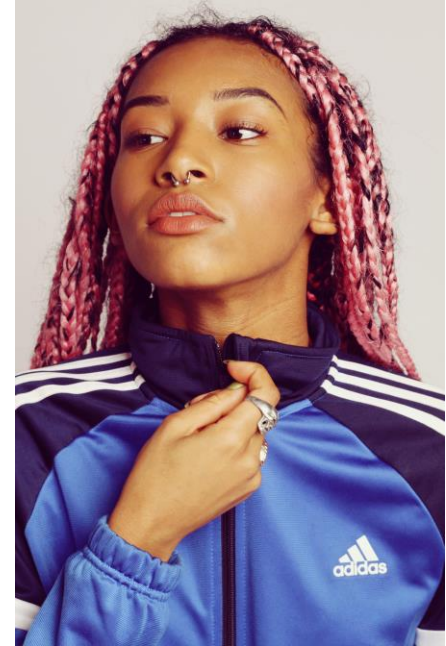
- ☐ Challenge gender stereotypes and ensure that people of all genders are represented in our offer.
- ☐ Continue our Caring Dads offer – a programme which focuses on gender-based violence.
- ☐ Continue to embed the Safe and Together Model of intervention when working with men who are violence in their intimate relationships
- ☐ Create an early help workforce that is confident and competent in working with men but we will work hard to understand and supportively address any barriers staff may have.
- ☐ Ensure fathers and significant men in the family are included in our work and develop regular quality assurance and audit processes that monitor this.
- ☐ Strive to provide services and sessions where men can attend. Challenge the preconception of 'absent or non-involved' fathers in our work and language.
- ☐ Review recruitment practices to attain more men in social work, early help and care professions to increase representation.



Young People's Charter - 'Prioritise our safety'

What this means for us:

- ❑ We will work closely with Public Health and universal services to provide quick and easy access to help and support at the earliest point of time to prevent needs from escalating
- ❑ We will provide access to early intervention for those children, young people and families that have experienced early trauma, ensuring that our response is considered and goes at the pace of the family.
- ❑ Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are adverse and stressful events that can have a long-lasting impact on the ability to think, interact with others, on their learning and can increase the risk of experiencing a range of health conditions in adulthood. We work together to prevent adversity, raise awareness of ACEs, intervene early to reduce the impact of ACEs to build resilient children, families and communities.



Early Help Work in Action: A Newham-based Primary School

Tragically, a local primary school was informed that a pupil had witnessed the unfortunate passing of her father's death during the Easter holidays. In response, the school immediately offered a space for the child to express her feelings to a trusted member of the pastoral support team whilst also making a referral to the Child Bereavement Service for additional support and guidance.

Governance and Accountability

This strategy will be in place for a period of three years, overseen by the Newham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NSCP).

The Early Help Strategic Partnership Board will be accountable to the NSCP for delivery of the strategy.

Sitting beneath the Early Help Strategy will be a partnership driven action plan outlining our collective efforts and responses to each of the 8 priorities listed which will be refreshed annually.

Early Help Work in Action: Children's Centre Family Support

A mother and her two children aged 2 years and 11 years fled from domestic abuse which was perpetrated by the children's father. The family were rehoused in Newham due to safety reasons. Mother described herself to be isolated with no family or friends' network but was eager to build on forming new relationships within her new community.

Mother was invited to attend sessions at the Children's Centre with her youngest son, which she attended virtually, in person and via group sessions. She formed good relationships with other parent/ carers within the groups. Concerns were raised regarding the 2 years old's communication and language and so a referral was made to the Child Development Service and he was seen by a Speech and Language Therapist to offer support. Mother engaged in the 5 weeks Little Talkers Course via Zoom, which mother reported she found helpful to support with her youngest son's speech and language development. The FSW made a referral to Early Notification whereby a Nursery placement was identified for the 2-year-old to monitor and support with his overall development.

Mother was supported to register with a local GP and with submitting an in-year school application for the eldest child. With news of father's untimely passing a few months later, the school was informed who provided a mentor to provide ongoing emotional support.

The family now regard Newham as their new home and place of safety.