

MULTIAGENCY EARLY HELP STRATEGY

2023-2026

Support in your community



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FOREWORD



Our Early Help Strategy aims to establish a supportive community and culture in Newham that promotes integrated ways of working and more effective use of resources to bring about positive changes for children, young people, and families.

While many children have the support they need to lead positive lives, some face difficult circumstances. These can be complex, relating to social, economic, and well-being issues. With the right support, families can build positively on their relationships and grow from their experiences. Evidence shows that a supportive community is essential for the well-being of our children, young people, and families, and it is a critical aspect of our strategy.

Early Help services must remain responsive and flexible in supporting residents across a growing range of needs, facilitating access across a wide system of support in the community and public sector offer. It is crucial that we create a culture in Newham where it is okay to ask for help and that support pathways empower residents to do so. There should not be a referral culture that discourages residents from seeking help.

When families require more intensive support, organisations in Newham are committed to working compassionately, curiously, confidently, clearly, and collaboratively with them and across the whole system. Our aim is to create an effective early help offer that supports families and prevents situations from deteriorating to the point where safeguarding interventions are necessary.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julia Stephens-Row'.

Julia Stephens-Row

Independent Chair of Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership, on behalf of the Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive

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’.

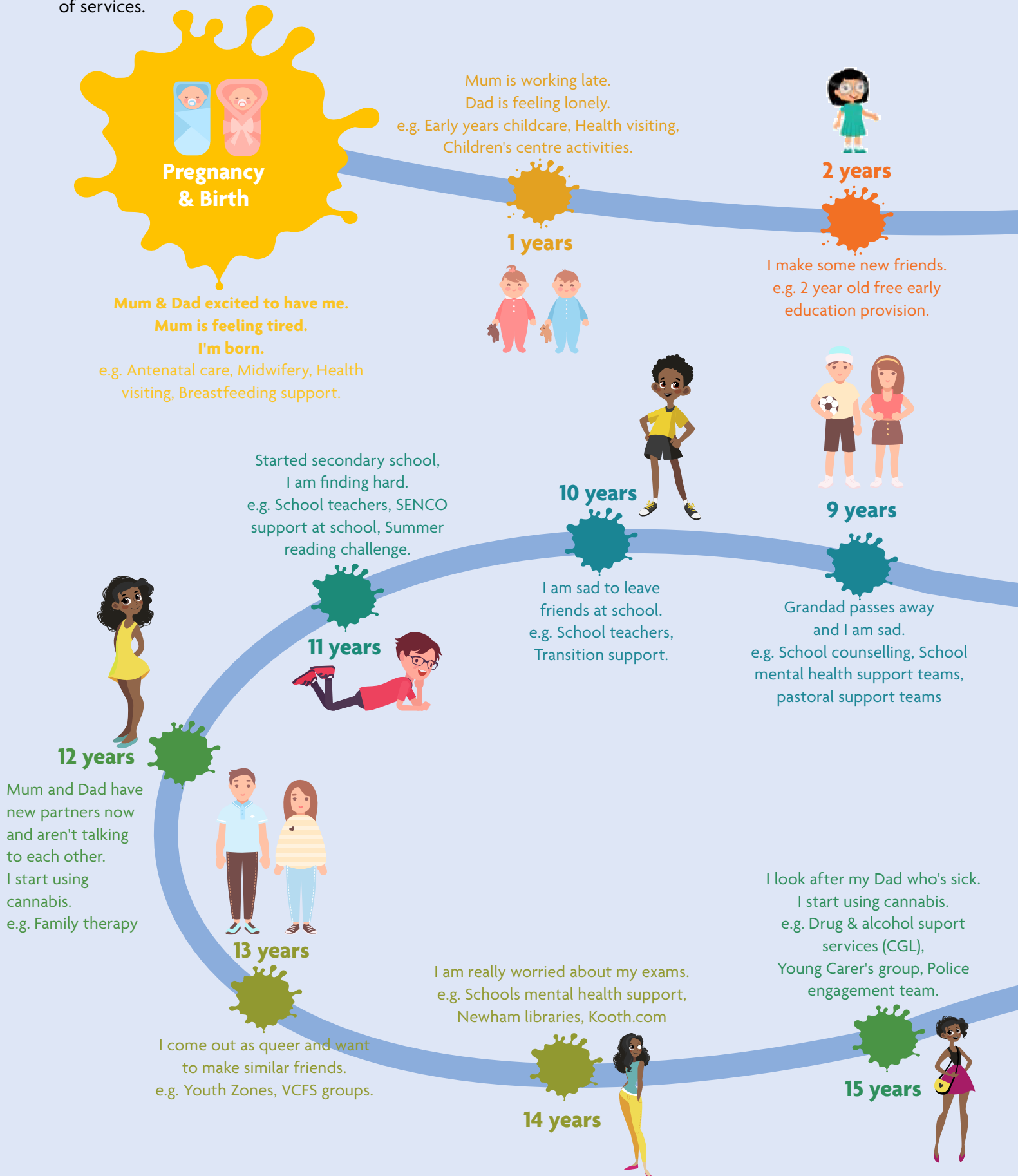
‘The Children’s Centre Family support worker was so helpful I don’t know what we would have done without her. She brought my children resources when we couldn’t go out and she contacted the council on our behalf so we could be moved to a safer neighbourhood. Thank you!’

‘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.





I start going to pre-school
e.g. School teachers

3 years



4 years

Mum & Dad struggling with money
e.g. Our Newham Money, Our
Newham Work, Children's centre
family support team



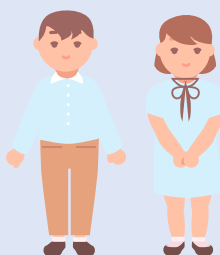
5 years

Dad gets new job I stay with
Grandad during the week
Slow speech and language
development
e.g. Speech & language
services, SEND support.



8 years

Relationship breakdown
with Mum and Dad
e.g. Parent befriending



7 years

I start learning to act
e.g. Voluntary sector club,
Holiday activity fund.



6 years

I am diagnosed with autism
e.g. Language, communication
& interaction service, CHIL
development services, GP,
School nurse

I struggle more to cope with
stress and anxiety.
e.g. CAMHS, Schools mental
health support.



16 years



17 years

I join a local choir.
e.g. Compost Newham,
Voluntary sector club.

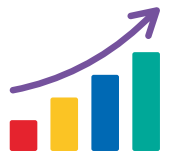
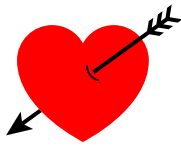
I look for a job that interests me.
e.g. Newham Youth, Apprenticeship
scheme, Post-16 providers, Mentoring,
Our Newham Work.

**18-25
years**



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

WHAT DOES EARLY HELP LOOK LIKE IN NEWHAM?



Universal/Community Level

Targeted Early Help

Intensive Early Help

Specialist Services

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.

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.

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.

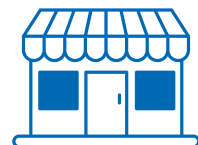
Mental Health

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.

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.



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PRIORITIES

PRIORITY...

- ① **Easy access to information, advice and support for all.**
- ② **Integrated pathways to support with priority service areas.**
- ③ **Safe environments and safe communities**
- ④ **Help & support for families with SEND**
- ⑤ **Address emotional health & wellbeing**
- ⑥ **Working with parents and significant role models**

BECAUSE...

We know our early help system isn't always easy to navigate, particularly for families with older children and families with English as a second language.

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

The impact of early childhood experiences and traumatic episodes can impact on children's development and ability to flourish. The contextual risks that adolescents face increases with age and continues into young adulthood.

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

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

We have a strong uptake of our parenting offer, which we can develop further to broaden reach. Traditionally, men have been under-represented when families engage with us.

EASY ACCESS TO INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR ALL.

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:

- Develop a single point of access, which builds on the foundations of our multi-agency safeguarding hub to streamline pathways for early intervention.
 - Review delivery models across the Early Intervention and Children's Social Care system to incorporate 'Family Help', incorporating recommendations from Independent Review of Children's Social Care.
 - Undertake community mapping exercise to understand target groups we want to engage with and how and where best to engage with these target groups, including existing outreach support.
 - Develop a communications and engagement plan for Early Help which includes digital and social media, as well as harnessing the role of outreach with community, voluntary and faith sector.
 - Ensure training incorporates a strong equalities lens - with specific training offer on cultural humility and trans awareness to ensure our service offer is accessible.
- Prototype having a locality based family hub in East Ham consisting of an integrated offer between children's centres, libraries early help, social care and health.
 - Following prototype, evaluate and develop a model consisting of four locality main family hub sites as well as a range of spoke sites which will provide service's locally that are accessible, affordable, and close to where families live.
 - Develop and embed an integrated model across Youth Zones and Family Hubs – piloting an approach at Shipman Youth Zone, encompassing a whole family offer across the age range.



INTEGRATED PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT WITH PRIORITY SERVICE AREAS.

We know that the stressors that families experience such as cost of living, employment, housing and health can often lead to one another and may grow to have a detrimental impact on their health and wellbeing. Family needs may not be attributed to one issue. Children, young people and parents/ carers access help through a variety of ways and places, which evidence tells us will primarily be through someone they trust. Whoever a person first reaches out to, behind that person is a strong local system with seamless pathways to get that person right support from the right service at the right time. This means families will not experience going through multiple processes for help.

What this means for us:

- Develop smarter use of data through an integrated data hub, connecting data over systems across the partnership and improving data sharing, so that families do not have to tell us the same story twice.
- Explore new models for integrated pathways to support across Family Hubs and Housing.

- Pilot embedding Early Help staff and Family Navigators within existing service provisions such as Housing Hubs and Libraries
- Pilot an approach embedding health clinics with Youth Zones - improving access to vital health services for young people in an environment they feel safe.
- Consider expansion of Social Care Academy in Newham to coordinate early help, safeguarding and systemic training across a range of partner services, schools and VCS.
- Maintain the Whole School Asthma Programme and strengthen the long-term condition management training for Schools
- Undertake a discovery exercise exploring a cost of living response within our family hubs.



SAFE ENVIRONMENTS AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

Creating environments and communities that support families, children and young people to be safe, happy and healthy is important. This approach ranges from the very foundations since birth, and developing an approach which recognises adverse childhood experiences. Additionally, 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 equipped 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:

- Implement exploitation and youth safety primary aged awareness programmes.
- Implement a primary school workforce training programme to raise awareness of exploitation to staff.
- Establish an integrated pathway to support between Vanguard Services and PCEHH for children and young people who are at risk of exploitation and Serious Youth Violence.
- Devise a package of support for parents of children that are at risk of exploitation and/or youth violence.
- Update Family Information Service and Local Offer pages to reflect support for children and young people at risk of exploitation.
- Work with education to influence a change in language around exclusion and to explore a zero tolerance approach to exclusion amongst cyp over represented in the exploited cohort.
- Develop integrated Children and Youth Family Hub across Newham in association with The Youth Empowerment Team.
- Align the SAFE interventions with the work of preventative services.
- Work with schools, SEND and CAMHS services to identify vulnerable young people that have an unidentified or undiagnosed need.
- Embed ACES awareness and support in Family Hubs
- Implement a school based violence within teenage relationship intervention as part of the parenting strategy and team
- Implement a school workforce training programme that address violence against women and girls, utilising a trauma informed way of working.



HELP & SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES WITH SEND

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.

- Upskill universal and targeted early help services to work with families of children with SEND.
- To develop the parenting offer to include targeted evidenced based parenting programmes and workshops for families of children with SEND
- Explore opportunities for community-led SEND provision to be delivered within a family hub.

What this means for us:

- To create a 0-25 years SEND Early Help offer as part of the Family Hubs network comprising Practitioners, Parent and Carer Assessors and Short Break Co-ordinator with greater integrated of LA run SEND and community based services. To support families of children with SEND offering early help following a diagnosis or in response to issues such as a CYP missing education, bullying, school exclusion, exploitation, school refusal etc.



ADDRESS EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

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:

- Review existing model of CAMHS mental health support integration into Youth Zone and consider further expansion and join up as part of Family Hubs model.
- Pilot sexual health and substance misuse within a youth zone
- Work with Well-Being Newham and young people, to create Thriving Young Minds Website - which will include information for young people on emotional well-being/mental health and where to go for help
- Pilot the Thriving Young Minds website between April and September 2023
- Develop systems and processes for continuation of the MAC
- Develop outcomes framework with MAC partners
- Linking the cost of living response to the work in Early Help and consider the impact of the our time, kids time project in Newham.



WORKING WITH PARENTS AND SIGNIFICANT ROLE MODELS

Supporting parenting is integral to supporting children's wellbeing and early development – particularly in the early years when babies and pre-schools are totally reliant on primary caregivers. All parents and carers (including fathers) need help and support from time to time. This may be through friends, family and community settings. As a local authority connected to its communities, we can support parents to thrive, empowering a community response. 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:

- Establish four parent-carer panels that are aligned to our four family hub geographical areas.
- Continue with our EPEC peer parenting model and strengthen the model further within a family hubs approach.
- A virtual parents' drop-in surgery will be introduced to support those parents of children with additional needs as well as other parenting challenges
- Develop a service offer on preparing for parenthood and reducing parental conflict
- Create a model of community parents support network to help support and promote services to other parents.
- To develop a father's forum that is led by fathers and significant males that can offer support to other fathers and provide expertise and knowledge to professionals and system as a whole.



GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This strategy will be in place for a period of four 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 – with quarterly reporting.

Sitting beneath the Early Help Strategy will be a partnership driven action plan outlining our collective efforts and responses to each of the six 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.

NOTES

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