



## **Supporting parents in Hammersmith & Fulham: a positive and strategic approach**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out what we intend to do to develop services that support parents in Hammersmith & Fulham. Over the next 3 years a coherent and connected set of services will be developed that offer help and support for everyone concerned with improving the skills and confidence of parents, whatever the level of need may be. **The highlights of the strategy are to develop the following:**

- Readily available advice about a whole range of services that support families through the Family Information Service (FIS)
- A single point of contact for enquiries about Parenting Skills training in the Parenting Co-ordinator Service.
- Building on the training to date of more than 70 Parenting Practitioners with skills in the Triple-P model of support. We will use the Parenting Co-ordinator Service as the body that will support parenting practitioners and facilitate further training around the borough to meet identified need and involving all providers and parents themselves
- Develop readily-accessible services to families with additional needs through children's centres and the extended services for schools programmes
- Develop our targetted services for more vulnerable families where parents may be teenagers themselves, may have substance misuse problems or have some other difficulty that prevents them from being as effective and confident a parent as they can be.
- Develop and evaluate the use of Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders with parents where we have to intervene statutorily in the lives of families where appropriate and with the consent of courts.
- Develop services that can demonstrate their value and measure the help that they give to families

It is widely understood now that positive and responsible parenting helps children to have the best start in life, to grow up happily and healthily and to be able to enjoy, achieve and be economically secure members of the community as adults. At the national level, recently announced initiatives such as the Children's Plan (*DCSF 2008*) and Think Family (*Cabinet Office 2008*) suggest an emphasis on families and not just on the services that support children or adults.

Within Hammersmith & Fulham all of the agencies who are concerned with supporting families are establishing a Partnership that brings together everyone who is interested with parents and parenting in the borough. Their aim is to ensure that the right services are provided, that parents know where they are and how to make contact with them and that they respond to changing need.

Children's Services and its partners are, of course concerned about those families who may need additional supports, but we want advice and support on parenting to be available to anyone who wants it. We will draw on our understanding of local need and of what research tells us is effective in practice.

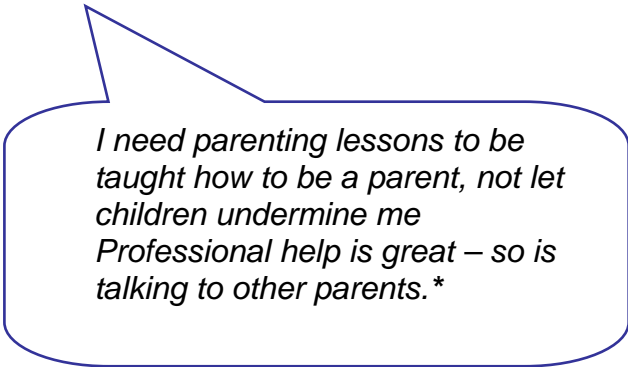
The Children's Services Department and its partner agencies through the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPPB) have a strong commitment to

developing the way that services for children and their families are planned, funded and delivered in order to achieve better outcomes for all children. The Every Child Matters (ECM) policy context, the sharing of Information and the Common Assessment Framework are crucial to the proper development of this strategy. We understand that families want help which is responsive to need and to their circumstances and so we aim to develop a lively “mixed economy” of support services, with Children’s Centres, schools (through the Extended Services for Schools programme) and the voluntary sector playing a key role in the provision of a flexible and dynamic service.

Research literature shows conclusively that families can be supported and parenting practices improved, leading to improved educational and behavioural outcomes in children (*Research in Practice 2005*). Decisions about what services should be commissioned and developed depends on a range of factors, but particularly the commitment to working with families and listening to what they want. This strategy therefore places a great importance on the active participation of parents in the design and review of services and locally we can demonstrate a great deal of good practice in service user involvement in Children’s Centres, commissioned services and the newly-developed Parents Forum.

Where the strategy describes an offer of services, it should be acknowledged that the great majority of contact with parents is of a voluntary nature, and improving parents’ skills and confidence is something entered into on a mutually agreed basis. Services do also intervene compulsorily as required in the lives of families through Parenting Orders and Parenting Contracts available to the Education Welfare Advisory Services and the Youth Offending Services to address school attendance, crime and anti-social behaviour issues where parents are unwilling to engage, or as part of a child protection plan led by the Complex Needs Service.

This strategy does not stand alone but fits within the overall framework of services that the borough provides or intends to develop as described in the Community Strategy (2008) and the Children and Young People’s Plan (2008-11). It also links to key areas that we are developing including Integrated Youth Support, Extended Services for Schools, Early Years, Community Safety and others.



*I need parenting lessons to be taught how to be a parent, not let children undermine me  
Professional help is great – so is talking to other parents.\**

(\* Quotations are from parents using the Family Welfare Association service, north Fulham, with kind permission)

## 2. Context

### National Context

2.1 At a national level there is a growing interest in the significance of parents and carers influence on children's development throughout their childhood, as well as a recognition of how at times it can be a difficult and stressful task. This significance is shown in the publication of the **Every Parent Matters** document (DFES 2007) which encourages local authorities to engage with and provide an appropriate range of services to support parents. It is widely understood that a child's experiences and achievements will be heavily influenced by the quality of parenting that they received. Parents want to know what resources are available to help them, and local authorities want to build on early-intervention initiatives that support communities and diminish the need for expensive and highly interventionist services later on.

2.2 Demographic changes at a national level include:

- mothers working longer hours
- fathers spending more time with their children
- parents having children later
- more variety in family structures
- increased ethnic diversity
- parents also juggling care for elderly relatives
- young adults remaining at home with their parents
- Immigration, particularly from the new European Community "A8" states

And locally:

- high mobility of the child-bearing age group in Hammersmith and Fulham
- previously high numbers of teenage pregnancies reducing year on year

2.3 Despite all of the above, some universal constants remain, particularly that children from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to succeed by a variety of measures and to achieve their five Every Child Matters outcomes. For these reasons, the local authority targets particularly vulnerable groups and communities in order to maximise every child's chances of succeeding in life. This strategy and the developments in services it describes are expected to make a significant contribution to these aims.

2.4 Government has become concerned that policies should be promoted to support families, as evidenced by the **Think Family** initiative (Cabinet Office 2008). The emphasis of this policy is that agencies should consider the needs of families as a whole rather than view them as the needs of children or adults.

In section 12 (page 25) the strategy describes the need to work closely with colleagues in Community (adult) services to ensure that we have services that are joined-up and support vulnerable families as a whole. In practice this means that where Community services engage with an adult because of mental health issues for example, that they are also considered as a parent and the support and protection needs of the family addressed as a whole.

Equally Children's Services must be aware of the range of health and social care services that support vulnerable adults.

2.5 The Department for Children, Schools and Families has recently published the **Children's Plan** which states the ambition to make the United Kingdom the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up and sets out how it will achieve these aims – by “*putting the needs of families, children and young people at the centre of everything we do*” (*Children's Plan 2008*). Five principles underpin the Children's Plan:

- Governments do not bring up children - parents do and so the government needs to do more to back parents and families
- All children have the potential to succeed and should go as far as their talents can take them
- Children and young people need to enjoy their childhood as well as grow up prepared for adult life
- Services need to be shaped by and responsive to children, young people and families, not designed around professional boundaries; and
- It is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later

2.6A further recent development has been the establishment of a **National Academy for Parenting Practitioners**. Its purpose is:

- To support the training of a range of professionals, including social workers, clinical psychologists, community safety officers and youth justice workers.
- Training, development and support for the parenting workforce, especially but not exclusively - the trainers of practitioners and those who train trainers.
- Acting as a national centre and source of advice on high-quality academic research evidence on parenting and parenting support, combined with practical knowledge of what works and has worked in different situations and with different client groups.

### **Local Context**

2.7 This Parenting Strategy will significantly contribute to the council's **Borough of Opportunity** initiatives by playing its part in breaking the cycles of deprivation that affect many of our families. Although many London Boroughs would make an issue of the extremes of wealth and deprivation that they have to address, Hammersmith & Fulham has some particular challenges to face.

- Hammersmith & Fulham parliamentary constituency is the 15<sup>th</sup> most affluent borough in the country
- Only Tower Hamlets has more children who qualify for free school dinners
- A fifth of households have incomes over £50,000;
- At the same time 51% of households have incomes below £20,000
- The borough ranks fourth highest in London for average house prices (over £450,000)
- Only 44% of families own their own home compared to 56% in London and 75% of working households in the borough were unable to afford to buy
- 18% of the working age population is on some form of benefit.

2.8 The council is tackling these issues through a comprehensive agenda that focuses on establishing Hammersmith & Fulham as a borough of opportunity. This means significant developments that affect families in the following areas:

- Schools of choice, with over £100 million being invested in secondary schools through the Building Schools for the Future initiative
- Developing the housing market so as to increase choice and enable lower-income families to buy their own homes or equity shares. Thereby families will be encouraged to “invest” in the borough and reduce the population turnover
- Regeneration of the most deprived areas
- Making the borough cleaner and greener, including investment in parks to make them safer and more attractive for all

2.9 Other key local influences include the following key priorities of the council:

- High quality value for money services and lower council tax year on year. The Parenting Strategy can clearly contribute through ensuring that timely and accessible services prevent a need for more expensive interventions later on.
- Improved quality of life by cracking down on crime and anti-social behaviour. It is a council priority to tackle crime and minimise the environment for crime in partnership with the police. A strategy that supports families can support this by giving parents the confidence to ask for help when they need it and feel that their concerns are being addressed.
- Setting the framework for a healthy borough and particularly reducing the use of acute services and helping vulnerable residents to live more independent lives. The Parenting Strategy will contribute through improving parents’ confidence and reducing their anxieties, helping them to provide loving and clear boundaries for their children, so reducing the possibility of behavioural and mental health difficulties, and increasing the chances of their doing well in school later on.

2.10 We also provide supports for parents because there is a sound economic and social case for doing so. In 2006 the Children and Young People’s Partnership Board was presented with a report entitled “Working with High Need, High Harm and High Cost Families”. This report highlighted that although the number of families requiring intensive multi-agency involvement was relatively small (perhaps 25-30) the cost of intervention was substantial and the negative impact of the families on the borough was significant. The report recommended that the borough consider offering parenting support and education as a means of preventing more significant costly interventions and that the borough consider a new approach to working with identified families which embeds an integrated approach to family support (*Cabinet Briefing, Phase 2 Children’s Centre Development*). Council tax payers will therefore ultimately benefit through controlling these costs.

2.11 The case for investing in Parenting Support is therefore an economic one, as well as being based on our knowledge of what families want. Joined-up services via the Common Assessment Framework will link families with opportunities to improve their parenting, thereby improving family well-

being and stability, lead to better outcomes for children and help families to access a whole range of services of benefit to them.

- 2.12 The development of many of our services over the last 2 years has been informed by the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2006-08. In May 2008 we will publish a new CYPP for the period 2008 to 2011 which will also link to Hammersmith & Fulham's Local Area Agreement targets. During the review and consultation exercises that have taken place to inform the new CYPP, many themes relevant to the parenting agenda have emerged. These include the need to develop our early intervention services

### **3. The need for Parenting Support in Hammersmith & Fulham**

3.1 The Parenting Strategy is something that any parents in the borough may benefit from. However, being aware of the links between stresses in relation to housing, employment, poverty, health and their consequences for family life can give rise to an understanding of where needs might particularly lie. Children's Services already links many aspects of its provision of services to measures of need, a significant example being the provision of Children's Centres. The first and second wave of Children's Centres have been located in order that they reach the more deprived areas and can then tackle some of the underlying causes that lead to underachievement and poorer outcomes for children. The third wave to be developed will ensure that all parents are within easy reach of support right across the borough.

3.2 There is an abundance of data already available in the mapping of need that has led to the distribution of early years provision, as well as information on the needs of extended services school clusters. A snapshot of some of the relevant statistics includes the following:

- The local population in H&F is 171,400 (ONS Mid-year estimate 2006) of whom around 35,000 are children aged under 18. The population as a whole is growing and estimated to reach 184,800 by 2011.
- The borough has a relatively young and ethnically diverse population. Just over one in five households are from non-white backgrounds and ninety languages are spoken in local schools.
- The population is highly mobile with the council's Housing Needs Survey 2003 showing that of the 35,000 households, almost half had moved in the previous 5 years and 1 in 3 in the rented sector moving annually.
- 27% of people in H&F live in poverty compared to 18% in London and 17% in the country as a whole (Housing Needs Survey 2003).
- Half of the 35,000 households had an income of less than £19,500 and 36% less than £10,000 per annum (Housing Needs Survey 2003).

3.3 The Parenting Strategy Group that has driven the delivery of this strategy has identified that there are more precisely defined areas of need that require further examination, and we have commissioned two audits that will affect the delivery of parenting and wider family supports. These are:

- An understanding of the needs of families who are known to the child protection services and the services they need, particularly in relation to parenting that will diminish concerns about safety issues.
- An understanding of the supports provided by the local voluntary sector, sometimes by very small organisations linked to knowledge of how they identify and respond to need.

3.4 We know already from services that are providing parenting support how much it is valued by parents for both informal supports as well as formal Positive Parenting Programme interventions. We do not have as yet a sufficient number of evaluated outcomes other than parents expressed opinions, and we will commission an evaluation of the outcomes of our parenting skills training in 2009.

3.5 The north Fulham Family Welfare Association, a significant partner in the provision of parenting services has undertaken a thorough evaluation of its services in 2007. In a 5 month period (Jan to June 07, of 41 referrals 18 (44%) were described as being to address relationship issues between parents and children, by far the highest individual category.

3.6 The following is an extract from the FWA evaluation paper from 2007. In order to develop its model of delivery the FWA undertook research with parents whose children attended local schools.

**What do local parents say?**

From the 85 parents consulted, we learned that parents want groups delivered within schools. Parents were also very keen to tell us that they did not want to be patronised and would welcome a challenging but supportive environment

We also learned that parents considered the most significant indicator of successful parenting as being their child's academic achievement

In response to the clear wish for parenting support groups FWA recruited a parenting group worker who is currently taking referrals through a number of routes including the 3 target primary schools.

FWA parent groups will target a number of parenting concerns with the overarching aim of helping children achieve ECM outcomes

Each parent will complete the scientifically recognised Rosenberg parental satisfaction scale pre and post intervention in order that we can measure improvements in quality of family interaction

The groups will also contain significant elements of the borough recognised model of Triple P

3.7 The FWA is working with 3 primary schools in one of the more socially deprived areas of the borough. However, if the interest shown above in parenting support is typical for all of the borough's schools, as it will be as part of the core offer for Extended Services then there is a clear indication of a very high level of demand to be met.

3.8 This strategy also has significance for parents who are engaged with our services because of significant concerns for their ability to supervise and control their children, to the point of statutory intervention. The Education Welfare Advisory Service and Youth Offending Service particularly have access to legislation that encourages or compels a parent to be engaged in order to address their parenting. For the EWAS this would be a failure by parents to ensure that their child attends school, and for the YOS a failure to ensure their child does not engage in criminal or anti-social behaviour. In 2007 the EWAS initiated 43 Parenting Contracts and 8 Parenting Orders. The Youth Offending Service had 2 Parenting Orders and no Parenting Contracts, and as described later this remains an area for development.

3.9 In the establishment of the case for developing the parenting Co-ordinator Service, an extensive piece of research was undertaken with 306 face-to-face interviews with parents resident in the borough. The aims of the survey was designed with the following aims :

- To establish the level of awareness of parenting services generally and courses in particular in the borough
- If aware, to investigate levels of awareness of sources of information
- To investigate attitudes to and understanding of parenting services and parenting courses and any differences regarding ages of children and gender.
- To seek to establish the level of demand for parenting support services generally, and courses as a component of these, across the borough and socio economic groups
- To gain insight into how parents would prefer to receive information about programmes, courses and sources of help with parenting issues

The survey is highly detailed but indicates a strong level of interest in parenting support using a variety of formats. Also undertaken were interviews with staff in Children's Centres who were asked to share any feedback they had from parents attending courses as examples of demand. The following are positive examples from one children's centre of how parents have successfully used the tips on bed times and listening to children. The examples also show that parents have gained confidence in their role as parents through attending a course.

*"I set the mood by drawing the blinds half an hour before bed and have a routine for going to bed. I also used clear instructions before bedtime. We play a "twinkle twinkle" machine as he settles"*

*"I bath her and she eats. She used to want several stories, now I tell her she is just going to have one book. It works perfect. She turned the pages of the book and at the end of the story said "Finished Mummy". "You have to explain and stick to it. I've got more control now."*

*"I made time for my older sons by putting P to bed a little earlier and letting them stay up a little longer instead of going to bed at the same time. It gave us time to spend together and to chat about the day. It was calm and I felt happy and they felt happy"*

*"He doesn't like me ignoring him so that can work when he doesn't listen to me."*

*"I took time to go to them when they called by saying "ok, I'm coming in 2 minutes" if I was doing something or busy. I kept to my word and stopped what I was doing. I got down to their level and tuned into what he was doing. So, he returned to what he was doing and seemed happy for the attention. I praised him when he was playing well."*

## What is Parenting Support and how have we planned for the development of services?

- 4.1 Because of the diversity of need and circumstance in Hammersmith & Fulham we do not intend to provide a single “product” or solution to the needs of parents. Our Children’s Centres and Family Support Services, and the multiplicity of valued voluntary sector services that we commission respond to needs that are individualised, specific and relevant to families, communities and localities.
- 4.2 Broadly speaking, **Parenting Support** is the whole spectrum of services that exist for parents and children that could be said to support family cohesiveness and contribute to the five ECM outcomes. Some of these are specific activities, but we should not overlook the everyday supports that teaching staff and health visitors that parents find very helpful. Within Hammersmith & Fulham the local authority and its partners have developed through Children’s Trust arrangements a wide range of supports, which are listed in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 However we are also very concerned with providing parents with more structured support which might be in a group or on a one-to-one basis. This is referred to as **Parenting Skills Training** and the preferred model employed in Hammersmith & Fulham is the **Positive Parenting Programme**, also known as Triple-P. What Triple-P involves is described further in section 6.
- 4.4 Most parents do not want or need Children’s Services to be overly-involved in their lives, they want to be able to either access services directly or be in control of what information is shared about them and say what supports they would find useful. The key to this is the regular use of the **Common Assessment Framework** (CAF) with its emphasis on clarity and openness and shared agreements with parents about the needs of them and their child. The use of the CAF will lead to joined-up assessments, much simpler and clearer routes to getting help for parents and for commissioners, a lot of helpful information about the needs of families to further plan services in Hammersmith & Fulham.
- 4.5 What this strategy describes is how we acknowledge these issues to determine what services to provide, enable or encourage. The table below shows the framework by which we think about and plan services for parents. They range from Tier 1 or universal supports that are readily available to anyone by a phone call, the internet or drop-in through to Tier 4 where we intervene statutorily in family life.

## 4.6 The Framework for planning Parenting Support

Level Of Need	Nature of Need	Supports Needed	Services to be Provided	
<b>Tier 1</b> Family and community networks of support + access to universal provision	All parents - universal support before problems arise	Information, participation and opportunity	Family Information Service  Parenting Co-ordinator service	← Parenting Co-ordinator Service →
<b>Tier 2</b> Family and community networks of support + access to universal provision + additional targeted support	Families needing additional supports, may be self-referred or because a service has identified a need for targeted support	Support for parents and additional help for children in universal settings	A developed range of Voluntary Sector services  Early Years Family Support Team  Parenting Supports via Extended Services for Schools	
<b>Tier 3</b> Family and community networks of support + access to universal provision + intensive and targeted support	Families with complex needs	Complex Interventions with families  Crisis intervention	Assist Family Support Service  CAMHS	
<b>Tier 4</b> Family and community networks of support + access to universal provision + statutory intervention	Parents who will not or cannot co-operate	Statutory intervention	YOS Parenting Support  Education Welfare Advice service  Child Protection Services	

## 5. What is a good parent?

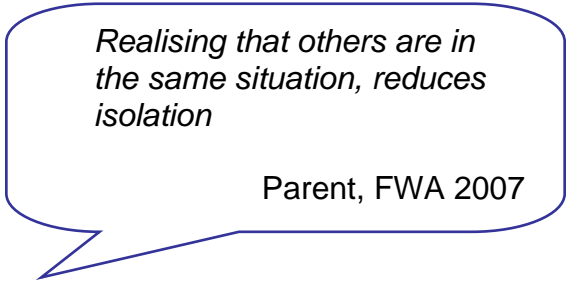
Definitions of a good parent aren't always helpful as it implies a single "right" way to bring up a child. Apart from parents' own skills, there are many differences in the size of families, their economic circumstances and access to the kinds of help and support that extended families, communities, churches and other networks have always provided.

Parents will also have very different ideas about issues in relation to their child such as achievement, respect, dress, language, and choice of friends, individual freedom of action and a whole range of issues. These are on the whole a normal part of family life and unless we are asked for help, we should leave parents to determine their own solutions.

However, there are some very basic elements that all children benefit from that should be a part of their upbringing that will help them as that grow up.

- Being given love and attention
- Being kept safe and healthy
- Ensuring that children go to school and helping them to learn
- Being given clear boundaries and learning right from wrong
- Being able to think about a child's needs, – that is to make strategies, however small and day-to-day to meet their needs and ensure their well-being.

All of the services that we provide or commission to work with parents should have sensitivity to culture not to impose ideas on parents, but help them to work out viable solutions to problems for themselves.



*Realising that others are in  
the same situation, reduces  
isolation*

Parent, FWA 2007

## **6. The Positive Parenting Programme (Triple-P)**

There are a small number of well-researched and validated parent training programmes that are available for development by any authority wishing to develop a preferred method of supporting parents. These include:

- Triple-P
- The Webster-Stratton Method
- Strengthening Families: Strengthening Communities

All of these approaches have great merit and all offer the benefits of a coherent approach to a multi-agency programme to develop a single, common means of improving parenting skills and confidence. In Hammersmith & Fulham it has been decided to adopt Triple-P, the Positive Parenting Programme as there was an established skill base in some of our Children's Centres.

### **Background**

Triple P, the Positive Parenting Programme, is a widely used method which originated in Australia. It is a system that aims to provide guidance for parents on parenting skills in order to promote good behavioural and emotional adjustment. Triple-P has the advantage of being thoroughly evaluated and accredited as a means of improving skills and confidence. It can only be delivered by practitioners who themselves have attended specialist training and follow-up assessments as to their skills and suitability to deliver the programme. Differing courses are provided according to the age of the children and complexity of the difficulties presented.

The aim of Triple-P is to provide highly accessible skills training for parents, including loans of materials to provide consistent, high-quality advice on parenting.

### **6.3 The development of Triple-P in Hammersmith & Fulham**

Throughout 2007 a widespread programme to develop the regular use of Triple-P was undertaken and over 50 staff became accredited in the method. Staff trained included those from Children's Centres, the Family Assist service, Youth Offending Service, Primary Care Trust personnel and thirteen staff from the local voluntary sector for whom the training was provided free of charge.

This however is only the start and we want to be sure that we have the right people in the right agencies trained to meet the needs of parents. We will commission the Parenting Co-ordinator Service to complete an audit of needs and identify which agencies, which areas of the borough or groups of staff should be further trained. This audit will be completed later in 2008 but it is already clear that there is insufficient access for schools and we need to ensure that either school personnel are trained or that schools have access to accredited personnel, for example in voluntary sector agencies.

As the model becomes embedded we want to develop further:

- To encourage parents to become trainers themselves, working with our services
- To work with agencies such as Housing where a market for parenting skills can be developed.

#### 6.4 Scientific background of Triple-P

The Triple P Positive Parenting Programme provides a system of behavioural family intervention that promotes positive, caring relationships between parents and their children and helps parents develop effective management strategies for dealing with a variety of childhood behavioural problems and developmental issues. The Triple P principles include:

- ensuring a safe, interesting environment
- creating a positive learning environment
- using appropriate discipline strategies
- Having realistic expectations, and taking care of oneself as a parent.

The system is empirically proven to be helpful to families and is currently employed by health professionals internationally. There is a substantial evidence base for the programme, and the effectiveness of intervention strategies has been established. Intervention is always accompanied by assessment of change using standardised measures. Triple P has been implemented very successfully in this country in Stoke-on-Trent and Glasgow. Its establishment in Salford provides an opportunity to evaluate its effectiveness at the primary care level in a UK setting.

#### 6.5 Implementation

- The Parenting Co-ordinator Service will take a leading role in ensuring that courses are available according to need.
- The Service will also lead a marketing campaign and provide dedicated telephone and electronic media contacts for enquirers.

#### 6.6 Evaluation and Quality Assurance

The Parenting Co-ordinator Service will also develop a quality assurance system for all accredited Triple-P courses that are provided in the borough. The purpose is so that parents can be sure of the quality and safety of the offer and that they have a means of addressing concerns or queries once they have taken part. We will commission a thorough evaluation of the programme before March 2009.

*To talk to other parents, receive advice from parents who have experience*

Parent, FWA 2007

## **7 The Parenting Support services that are available in Hammersmith & Fulham**

### **Tier 1: Universal Services: access to information and participation**

7.1 Hammersmith and Fulham has a complex network of statutory and voluntary sector services that support families. These grow and change as a response to need, new priorities and access to funding which is often of fixed duration. Printed directories can become out of date and misleading quickly and so we are developing a number of easy means for parents to have access to information about services. The three most significant are:

- An electronic directory of services which is available to all. This will become available in 2008. A wide range of information will also be available through Children's Centres and Extended Schools.
- The development of the Family Information Service (FIS) which will provide information to parents and carers about a wide range of services that the local authority and its partners provide for children and young people aged from 0 to 18. This is a development of the valued and successful Children's Information Service that has provided information on early years resources such as child-minding and nurseries.
- The Parent Co-ordinator Service. This is a very recent and significant development with a voluntary sector partner and is a key part of this strategy. The Parent Co-ordinator Service will also be a direct source for parents to enquire about where Parenting Skills training courses are available, but it will do a lot more than this. It will map which part of H&F live and what sort of places they are prepared to go to, to attend a course, such as a community or health centre or a school. It can then arrange for classes to be put on by accredited trainers as a response to demand. The Service is described in more detail in section 8.

7.2 The Department for Children, Schools and Families is also introducing the Parent Know-How programme designed to ensure that parents have access to information and guidance through telephone helplines, electronic media, internet technology and a new web search that will interface with existing sources of information such as the Ofsted website.

7.3 Children's Services has also established in 2008 a Parent's Forum comprised of parents who are already active in representational roles, such as being a school parent governor or a voluntary sector organisation management committee. The Forum is not in itself about parenting, but it does give a significant voice to parents and later this year the Forum will elect members to the Children & Young People's Partnership Board.

7.4 Much day-to-day support to parents by staff in universal settings is so routine that it can go almost unacknowledged. A parent who is anxious about how their child is doing at school can be seeking reassurance from a teacher as much as information about their child. Where schools do experience more minor difficulties over a child's attendance or behaviour they may address this through a voluntary Parenting Contract. Health visitors may be concerned with routine aspects of child development and immunisations, but they are also providing support on a wide range of concerns to parents.

7.5 The services within the Children's Services devoted to raising standards, along with the schools provide a range of services that work to support children in education including the BEST team, learning mentors, home-school liaison workers and the Parent Partnership service supporting parents of children becoming statemented for special educational needs. School supports are more fully described in 10.4.

## **7.6 Primary Health supports to parents**

All parents of young children have access to Health Visitors once they leave midwifery services and they are a key to effective early intervention. Every child aged under 5 has a named Health Visitor and the available national evidence is that parents greatly value the service. In March 2007 a YouGov poll for the Family and Parenting Institute showed that 76 per cent of parents in England want parenting support and advice on their child's health and development from a trained health visitor with up-to-date knowledge. Furthermore 83 per cent of parents wanted that support and advice in the home.

7.6 Health Visitor tasks include help and advice to parents on:

- Their child's growth & development
- Common infections in childhood
- Behaviour difficulties. Sleeping, eating, potty training, temper tantrums and teething.
- Breastfeeding, weaning, healthy eating, hygiene, safety and exercise
- Postnatal depression, bereavement and violence in the family

Health Visitors are also involved in:

- Working in partnership with families to tailor health plans to their needs
- Coordinating child immunisation programmes
- Organising and running baby clinics
- Health promotion groups, Breast feeding support groups, Parent support groups including parenting courses

7.7 Specifically concerning parenting, many parents, particularly first time parents experience doubts and anxieties about the best way to care for their child. Issues such as continued crying, dealing with tantrums and behaviour problems, feeding and childhood illnesses can fill parents with concerns about whether they are doing the right thing. Health Visitors also look for signs that parents are coping or not, determining whether something is a normal anxiety or a sign of a more serious problem such as post-natal depression.

Health Visitors offer antenatal visits, new birth visits and further child health check-ups at 8 months and 2 ½ years. However, Health Visitors have to manage caseloads of hundreds of children and inevitably they must concentrate their services on the most needy families or children who present particular concerns such as special needs.

7.8 Health Visitors will be able to refer service users to support services throughout Hammersmith & Fulham, particularly to Children's Centres. Health staff will benefit from the single source of information in the Family Information Service when it becomes available later in 2008.

Some Health Visitors have already undertaken the Triple-P Positive Parenting Course, and the audit being undertaken for the Parenting Co-ordinator Service will establish the need for training amongst primary health staff.

Health Visitors will also benefit from having the Primary Mental Health Workers (2 in post and a 3<sup>rd</sup> post planned) placed with them. The PMHW's will provide expert advice on emotional issues, increasing the Health Visitors knowledge, skills and confidence in advising parents.

## **8. The Parenting Co-ordinator Service**

8.1 The Parenting Co-ordinator Service was established in the latter part of 2007 and forms a key part of the Parenting Strategy in Hammersmith & Fulham. The purpose of the service is to establish the need for the provision of parenting skills training and ensure a good provision of trained and accredited parenting skills practitioners to meet demand. Its remit however goes far beyond maintaining static information, and to actively promote Triple-P skills training as something of benefit to all parents in the borough and advise parents of how they can find courses that meet their needs.

8.2 The Co-ordinator Service will perform a further vital function by linking together practitioners, particularly where they may be more isolated outside of Children's Centres, Youth Offending Service, etc and encouraging them to establish partnerships to put on trainings.

8.3 The Service has been tendered to the voluntary sector; with the successful tender being submitted by Blythe Neighbourhood Council. The aims of the service being provided by the voluntary sector are two-fold.

- To increase the acceptability and accessibility of the service to all parents in the borough
- To access resources which are not available to the council and encourage the growth of the service.

8.4 The Parenting Co-ordinator Service will develop a comprehensive marketing strategy throughout 2008 using printed and electronic media. It will advertise itself to parents resident in the borough and promote positive messages about what parenting skills training can offer and explain in clear language what Triple-P (the Positive Parenting Programme) involves.

8.5 As more Parenting Skills training courses are provided the Co-ordinator service will provide reports to the Children's Services Department on the development and use of the service and be responsible for the quality assurance of the service, taking and collating reports on the outcomes of each training.

8.6 The advantages of having a large pool of accredited trainers available in the borough are many. The intention is that staff in other departments and services such as housing or adult services may either wish to train their own personnel or have access to trained practitioners. A small number of practitioners in the Primary Care Trust, West London Mental Health Trust and the local voluntary sector have undertaken the training already and the intention is to grow this number further.

8.7 Where parents would like help but choose not to access a formal skills training course, we want to ensure that we have developed networks of parents and volunteers who can advise and support them as necessary, with the Parent Co-ordinator Service able to assist them.

## 9. Early Years and Child Care Services

### 9.1 Children's Centres

The five existing Children's Centres are the key supports that any parent of young children who lives within their catchment area can access, where they can receive a wide range of services from the multi-disciplinary teams and multi-agency services. These include antenatal and post-natal support, health advice, drop-ins, childminding supports and a huge range of other helps. In relation to parenting, each Centre has dedicated family support staff who aim to provide tailored assistance to each family that accesses the centres.

9.2 Children's Centre development in Hammersmith & Fulham is entering an exciting new stage, with the implementation of the programme to the phase 2 centre's, increasing the "reach" of the centres and bringing new services, including a dedicated family support service for the families of the 0-5 population. This is combined with a renewed focus on the most vulnerable families in response to research showing that nationally the Sure Start programme achieved much but was not reaching out to the most vulnerable families.

9.3 The government has recently announced the funding for the third wave of Children's Centres. Within Hammersmith & Fulham this will see the completion of the aim that every parent in all areas of the borough has access to Children's Centre services. This will largely be in the better-off south of the borough through developing co-located services and the continuation of the "outreach" focus of the phase 2 centres.

9.4 The Early Years and Child Care Service also plays a significant role in ensuring that there is an appropriate level of provision of childcare within the borough and works in partnership by developing and supporting the local Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector. Specifically, the role of the early years service is to:

- Ensure sufficient affordable, accessible, quality childcare, childminding and early years places in the borough.
- Recruit childminders to become members of Hammersmith & Fulham childminding network
- Provide free early years education places for all eligible three and four-year-olds
- Give advice and support to existing providers including guidance on policy and meeting Ofsted care standards
- Provide ongoing professional development for all childcare practitioners and enable new and existing practitioners to acquire vocational training
- Ensure that all early years and childcare providers have a person with particular responsibility for children with special needs and one with responsibility for equal opportunities policies
- Participate in the national recruitment strategy for childcare workers

- Work with employers in the borough to raise their awareness of family friendly policies and ways of working flexibly
- To assist private and voluntary sector providers to develop business plans and fundraising strategies

#### 9.5 **The Children's Centre Family Support Team**

A significant feature of our services for parents of young children is the development of a central team that will focus on supporting families who would not access the Children's Centres without additional support (and as such is a Tier 2 service as described in the model on page 11). The borough-wide team has been developed to target vulnerable families with children aged 0-5 years, who are finding it difficult to access Children's Centres and other support services.

The multi-disciplinary team will complete an initial assessment and then develop a tailored integrated package of support for each family. The team will undertake intensive home visiting and outreach support with the aim of linking families back into Children's Centres and other support services.

The Community Development Officer will offer information and support to other services on how they may identify and best target vulnerable families within the community. The team is part of the Children's Services Early Years Division and is funded through the Children's Centres. The team incorporates the Early Intervention Team Inclusion Officers.

The team links with all of the relevant existing services for parents of young children. This includes the Children's Centres, especially their Family Support Workers and Family Mentors, as well as other departments within Children's Services, Health Services and the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector (PVI).

#### 9.5 **Who is in the Children's Centre Family Support team?**

The team comprises of the following: Family Support staff, Social Work, Health Visitors, Midwives, Psychology and a Community Development Worker. The midwives will link with the Queen Charlotte's and Hammersmith Hospital Health Trust and with Chelsea and Westminster Health Trust and to the local authorities own teenage pregnancy service enabling early identification and support of pre-birth families who are causing concern as well as support to teenage parents.

9.6 In 2007 Children's Services commissioned for the first time a family volunteer home visiting service provided by **Family Friends**, a charity based in Kensington & Chelsea with a long history of providing a valued service in that authority. In H&F the service is linked to the Children's Centre Family Support Team working through the Community Development Worker and will focus on providing targeted support to parents for a duration of one year.

#### 9.7 **Childcare Affordability**

A key way in which the Children's Services Department supports parents is through ensuring an adequate supply of affordable childcare. The provision of subsidised day care places aims to make childcare in the capital affordable,

flexible and of greater quality whilst assisting parents to stay in or return to full time or part time employment. The London Development Agency runs two Childcare Affordability funding streams (CAP 1 and CAP 2) for Private, Voluntary and Independent sector providers of childcare for children under the age of 5.

CAP 1 is a supply side funding stream in which affordable childcare providers (those who offer their places at no more than £205 per week) are able to apply for a subsidy of up to £30.00 per week per place which will then reduce the cost of the childcare place for low income parents who are in receipt of Child Tax credit at a rate higher than the family element. This funding stream also has a flexible place element which again enables the same providers to receive up to £68 per week per place for places that are shared by more than two parents enabling parents to continue to work part time.

The CAP 2 is based on a pilot scheme called the West London Working Childcare Support Scheme (WLWCS). This scheme offers a range of childcare to meet the needs of the parents returning to employment, training or volunteering which will lead to employment. This scheme was developed and led by the Early Years and Childcare Service on behalf of the 6 west London boroughs (H&F, Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hounslow and Hillingdon). Eligible parents must be unemployed or working less than 16 hours per week and if a couple their partner must be eligible for the child tax credit at a higher amount than the basic family element. The scheme will pay for up to 100% of childcare costs for the length of the course or up to 3 months for those returning to work or volunteering. The applicants are expected to apply for all other childcare subsidies first and if this does not meet the childcare costs the WLWCS will top up this amount. WLWCS will only fund affordable childcare up to £205.00 per week for a full daycare place that is registered under Ofsted.

The LDA has enabled the borough to maximise the opportunities for local families by transferring CAP 1 underspend to CAP 2 and used for childcare not only for children under 5 but for children over 5 as well.

### **9.8 The Pre-School Learning Alliance**

Voluntary and community groups are significant providers of support to parents of very young children, and our most significant partner is the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the network of parent and baby/toddler and pre-school groups that the PSLA in turn supports. The significance of the PSLA is recognised by its being the largest recipient of council Main Grant Programme funding within services for children. The principle objectives of the PSLA are as follows:

To provide affordable high quality accessible childcare through community groups, for children under 5 years old. (8 Pre-Schools, 14 Parent & Toddler groups and mobile crèche sessions)
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To holistically support the development of new and existing member groups – including strategic representation.
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To ensure the training needs of all staff are met.
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To support local families – including community involvement, training and parenting needs.
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## 10 Schools, Extended Services and support to parents

- 10.1 The *Every Parent Matters* guidance (DfES 2007) states:  
*“In the school years, parents remain a major influence on their child’s success. The research shows that much of this is about the support that parents give to what the school and other services are trying to achieve.”*  
It illustrates this with examples such as reading with their children, helping with homework, and showing an interest in what they are doing, attending plays and sports events, etc. Most parents recognise the importance of this and build on this support by encouraging their children to do activities outside school.
- 10.2 Although there is strong evidence of the importance of parental engagement, getting a useful level of engagement is not always easy for schools. Research shows at a national level that parents may feel a strong connection to their primary school but less so with secondaries. Clearly the local circumstances in H&F where a large proportion of the borough’s secondary population are resident in other boroughs do not aid engagement. Different parents have different needs and the borough’s diverse population, speaking different languages and for some coping with additional social disadvantages does not help.
- 10.3 This strategy acknowledges that teaching staff do talk to parents about a wide variety of concerns that are not directly related to the education of their child on a daily basis. There are some key activities that we want to develop that will support parents and encourage better relationships where Extended Services for Schools can build on what is already being achieved. H&F already recognises that times of transition can be difficult and invests in Transition Learning Mentors to support pupils. An area to be developed is “Starting School and Moving-on” advice and information sessions for parents.
- 10.4 Provision within Hammersmith & Fulham schools varies according to identified need and priorities of the teaching staff, but include the following:
- Information for parents on transition processes
  - Information for parents on curriculum and key stages.
  - Parents evenings
  - Transition sessions for pupils moving up to secondary/visits to schools etc.
  - Parenting classes already provided through Extended Services
  - Signposting to provision, support groups etc.
  - Transition Learning Mentors based in secondary schools- linking with prospective year 7’s in primaries and working with new cohorts in secondary. The team also works with parents of new and prospective pupils.
  - Drop-ins for parents at schools on different issues such as bullying, curriculum, exams etc.
  - Family literacy and numeracy sessions.
  - An increasing number of schools are supporting Supplementary Schools for BME groups whose aim is to improve outcomes for particular minority populations. Many of these are “free-standing” but

there is evidence to suggest that the most effective ones are those that work with schools directly and tailor their offer to the national curriculum, in addition to the cultural teaching that they often provide.

## 10.5 Extended Services for Schools

One of the 5 elements of the Extended Services Core Offer is the provision of an accredited form of parenting skills training, which in the case of H&F will be Triple-P, the Positive Parenting Programme. As is described in section 8, the Parenting Co-ordinator Service is undertaking a large-scale mapping exercise of need in the borough, but it can be expected that a significant gap will be found in schools ability to access this type of support.

10.6 This strategy proposes that the response to need has the following elements:

- That school clusters further identify the local demand for parenting support, skills training specifically and the availability of their own staff for undertaking Triple-P training
- That further trainings are developed either for schools alone, or with other agencies drawing on extended services funding, schools own resources or external funding where it can be attracted to support school initiatives.
- That the Family Welfare Association working with schools in north Fulham be funded to a level adequate to develop its services more widely across the borough. The FWA has a small staff team who are entirely Triple-P trained and have undertaken skills training groups with parents who have self-referred, or been referred from health and social care settings.
- That Parenting Support Adviser monies distributed through Extended Services Surestart grant is used to fund this expansion as well as other desirable expansions of parenting support.

10.7 In 2008 the funding for the development of Extended Services that has to date been managed and distributed centrally will be devolved to the school clusters. This will give school headteachers the ability to have a far greater control over where investment in services is made and to target it to the needs of their cluster. Parenting support could potentially be a significant winner as it remains to be developed as a core element.

10.8 A further element of Extended Services has been the expansion of family learning opportunities. These focus on interesting, stimulating and fun opportunities for parents and children to learn together, including family literacy, language and numeracy.

10.9 H&F Adult Education Service also offers the Share, and Share Plus programmes. These provide sessions explore how parents/carers can understand their child's experience at school, the national curriculum, and effective family communication.

## 11 The Voluntary and Community Sector and support to parents

- 11.1 The local voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the borough are significant partners in the delivery of services that support parents, children and families. They are often well-regarded by children, young people and adults who appreciate the flexibility and ease of access and perceive their services as non-stigmatising in a way that statutory services can sometimes be. Children's Services aims to develop its early-intervention strategy with the aim of supporting children with additional needs before they needs grow and they need more complex and intrusive forms of help. Clearly, the VCS with its record of responding to need and support to communities can play a significant role in this.
- 11.2 The council funds many services either through its own Main Grant Programme and associated Fast-Track funding (for smaller grants), or through monies which are given to the council for particular purposes, which may be ring-fenced for spending on very specific activities. The latter includes the Children's Fund which has been extended from 2008 to 2011, as well as grants such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health modernisation, Extended Services, Substance Misuse and others.
- 11.3 An important aspect of the local authority's relationship with the VCS is "partnership". There are already existing arrangements through the Community and Voluntary Sector Association and the Children's Fund Partnership Board. However, in 2008 the latter will be reconstituted as the Children's Third Sector Forum with a much wider remit to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- 11.4 The Community and Voluntary Sector Association have been commissioned to provide an audit of all of the family support activity and this is expected early in 2008. This is an important piece of work as we want to ensure that all of the services in the borough can be identified and how to access them. For the commissioning team it will provide useful information on what to support and develop further.
- 11.5 Some of the key VCS family and parenting services are as follows:

West London Action for Children	Therapeutic support to parents and families, plus a range of school-based direct work with children
Shepherd's Bush Family Project	A range of services to families who are living in temporary housing
North Fulham Family Welfare Association	School-based parenting supports, plus a range of direct supports to children
Pre-School Learning Alliance	Support to parents of very young children via parent and baby groups, pre-school activities, etc
Urban Partnership Group (formerly Blythe Neighbourhood Council)	Providing a wide range of supports to the local community. Will provide the

	Parenting Co-ordinator service and will be a 2 <sup>nd</sup> -wave Children's Centre
Mencap / Parents Active	Advice, support and advocacy to parents of children with disabilities
Hammersmith & Fulham Action on Disability (HAFAD)	A range of supports to people with disabilities, their families and carers.
The African Child	Outreach work with BME families living in the north of the borough
DVIP	Providing risk assessments of male perpetrators of domestic violence as well as support to women and children affected by violence
ADVANCE	Advocacy work with survivors of domestic violence as well as direct work with affected children
Old Oak Community Centre	Family learning activities at the centre which provides a wide range of services to the local community
Breakaway	Supports vulnerable families through the provision of free holiday accommodation on the south coast
Family Friends	provides a volunteer family home visiting service, currently working with parents of children aged under-5
Staying Put Services	Providing family learning opportunities with a focus on developing nutritional skills and awareness

11.6 In 2008 the Children's Fund will be recommissioned as will in 2009 the council's own Main Grant Programme. We want to be sure that adequate resources are going into parenting and family support services in order to achieve our objectives of supporting Children and Young People's Plan priorities and wider council objectives.

## 12. Tier 2 Services: supporting parents and their children who have additional needs

12.1 Within this strategy, we are aiming to ensure that we have identified who we are aiming to provide services for and that we have either commissioned the right services or have plans and the resources to do so. It also means having the means of undertaking an assessment and having a plan to support a child and the processes by which information about a child's needs is shared in an open way. This is of course the **Common Assessment Framework**, about which a great deal of information is available on [www.lbhf.gov.uk](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk). Over time, the use of the CAF will lead to a great deal of valuable data on commissioning needs related to parenting.

### 12.2 Inter-agency work, Hidden Harm and the “think family” agenda

Services will be more effective where Children's Services work closely with colleagues in Community (adult) services to ensure that we have services that are joined-up and support vulnerable families as a whole. The government is encouraging local authorities and their partners to “**think family**” and better address the needs of families as a whole. In practice this means that where Community Services engage with an adult because of mental health issues for example, that their circumstances are also considered as a parent and the support and protection needs of the family addressed as a whole. Equally for when Children's Services are working with a family, assessment and intervention should take account of the adult's situation as the quality of parenting will clearly be improved in an adult who has their own support needs taken care of.

12.3 To support this theme, the Local Children's Safeguarding Board has a sub-group that addresses what is known as the “**Hidden Harm**” agenda to ensure that awareness of the impact of substance misuse and related domestic violence is adequately understood and training and resources directed accordingly. Eventually this will lead to earlier intervention, supporting families and improved safeguarding arrangements for children.

12.4 Key to ensuring progress in the development of this agenda are the following:

- Training opportunities on awareness-raising that are imaginative and relevant exist for all staff in direct contact with children and their parents, and senior managers reinforce the importance of attendance at these
- Easy-to-use screening tools exist for staff to undertake basic assessments, backed by training and protocols on referral between agencies
- Effective monitoring is in place that demonstrates an offer of support to families with additional or more complex needs that is linked to known demographic and needs data. Corrective action should be taken where service offer and uptake does not match need.
- Commissioning ensures that services are being provided where necessary to work directly with parents and their children.
- Parents are aware of what services are available to them and refer themselves or are content with a professional referring them.

## 12.5 **Support for parents and carers of disabled children**

The government has also recognised the additional burdens on parents of disabled children and has directed additional resources to local authorities to develop resources such as respite for parents. These developments are described in the following sections.

### 12.6 **Overall objectives**

The overall aims of the services provided for disabled children and their families in the borough are to provide opportunities for the achievement of the five ECM outcomes. Universal services can provide some of these as for non-disabled children and young people. In addition some resources are specifically targeted so as to provide opportunities for achievement of some or all of the five outcomes which they would not otherwise have because of the nature of their impairment or the capacity of their family alone to fully meet their needs.

Overarching objectives are to provide services which are accessible, relevant and integrated from the parent's point of view.

### 12.3 **Information**

Parents need clear, accurate information about matters relating to their disabled child's special needs and resources which will support them in meeting these and in meeting their own needs as carers. This needs to be presented in a sensitive and timely fashion if it is to be useful and empowering to the parent. There are good sources and presentation of information for parents in the various agencies with which they have dealings including the Cheyne Child Development Service, SLIT, the disabled children's teams, the Early Years service etc; there are also sources of information relating to specific issues such as

- The pilot Welfare Benefits Advice service which provides information, advice and assistance with benefits
- The Carer's Centre;
- The Early Years service which, for example has produced a booklet about transition from early years to primary school.

Children's Services also supports the Parent Participation Service (PPS). The PPS has been subject to a renewed focus from central government with the aim of improving the quality of the service and building parental confidence in the information they receive. In 2008 we will review our PPS with stakeholders to ensure that we are building to provide a best practice service.

### 12.4 **Assessment:**

Disabled children and their parents can face a battery of assessments, particularly at certain times such as initial identification of the disability and transition to adulthood. General principles for the delivery of these are that they are timely, transparent and invite the participation of the parent rather than be opaque and alienating. So for example Cheyne Child Development Service delivers a multi-disciplinary assessment and review process which aims to minimise the stress on parents and support them in forward planning.

The disabled children's team maintains two occupational therapists that carry out assessments of adaptation and accommodation needs. Having two postholders' means that there is effectively no waiting list.

Two new initiatives which relate to this area of support for parents are

- the introduction of a multi-agency protocol for transition to adulthood
- a pilot of eligibility criteria for use by the disabled children's teams in assessing the level of entitlement of families to funded support such as short break/respice services.

The first includes a clear timeframe for and guidelines about necessary assessments preparatory to the transition to adult services. There are also guidelines and processes for the involvement of parents.

The second makes very explicit how the needs of families for local authority funded support are quantified and actively invites the participation of parents in their completion.

## 12.5 Resources and provision:

Both parents and the two principle funders of resources, - the PCT and the local authority share concerns that limited resources are used effectively and equitably to maximise opportunities for disabled children and young people. It is also clear that respite or short breaks are critical to the support package which parents need and want. The 'Aiming High for disabled children agenda recognises this and has backed its expectation that all local authorities develop a core of appropriate short break provision with significant additional funding over the next three years. This borough already provides a good range of short break provision, including:

- residential short breaks at the Haven
- family based short breaks through 'Shared Care'
- after school and holiday short breaks at the Haven, HAFAD youth and accessible mainstream resources
- weekly boarding provision
- Direct Payments

The local authority's proposal for expansion of the range and accessibility of short break provision is to develop a bank of skilled and flexible carers who can work both within the child's home and support the child in other settings. It is also intended that a specific target group would be children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and challenging behaviour, who are currently a group who are often difficult to accommodate in current short break provision.

Parallel developments which are likely to have increasingly profound effects on the delivery of services are person centred reviews and planning and individual budgets. These bring increased parental participation in planning and increased flexibility and autonomy for both the disabled child/young person and their parents.

In 2007 a Child and Adolescent Mental Health service for children with learning disabilities and their families was introduced with the aim of ensuring that this group of children and their parents has the same access to CAMHS services as for any other child.

## 12.7 **Support to Adoptive Parents**

Hammersmith & Fulham, in partnership with the London Borough of Brent and the charity Adoption UK has set up a Buddy Support Scheme to support adoptive parents and long-term foster carers when they may be experiencing a difficult time with their child. The scheme gives adoptive families direct access to an experienced adoptive parent who can provide information and support as required.

12.8 Buddy Support recognises that parenthood can be hard for anyone at times, but that there are particular issues facing adoptive families where the advice and support of someone who directly understands the issues facing carers can be of enormous benefit. The scheme is an opportunity for adoptive parents to share any concerns and it can signpost on to other sources of support locally and nationally.

12.9 The scheme is completely confidential and allows for new adoptive parents to be matched to a buddy from their pre-placement meeting before the child is living with them and at any time onwards that the child is living with their adoptive parents.

## 12.10 **Special Guardianship for children formerly looked-after**

Special Guardianship offers a permanent placement within their family of origin to children who are looked-after and supports their secure attachment to adults who are related to them. There are many advantages to using Special Guardianship over other forms of permanency and H&F has sought to advance this as a good outcome for children. Research evidence shows good outcomes for children placed with members of their extended family and we want to ensure that every child placed in this way makes the best of their life chances. Children placed in this way are most likely to have been separated from their birth parents through statutory intervention to safeguard them and the local authority wants to be sure that they are placed in circumstances where their needs can be met until adulthood.

To support adults in becoming parents and carers to children who were previously looked after, a wide range of supports are offered to better ensure the stability of any arrangement. These include financial aid, advice and support (including support with continuing contact with the birth parents, advice on community resources and entitlements), the provision of therapy, education and health support, the full range of Leaving Care support, even where a Special Guardianship Order is made before the child's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and an annual review of the placement to ensure that the support is being received to make the placement successful.

## 12.11 **West London Action for Children (WLAC)**

Like many of our voluntary and community sector services, WLAC does not easily fit into a tiered model of provision, but it undoubtedly is a significant resource within H&F for parents, children and families as a whole that are experiencing emotional and relationship difficulties and is a valued and trusted service by residents. WLAC provides services from its offices as well as working with and through schools to support pupils by individual and groupwork. Similarly to our CAMHS services it does not provide practical

parenting skills but concentrates on therapeutic work and the underlying causes behind family distress.

## 13. Supporting Young Parents – the Teenage Pregnancy Team

### 13.1 The case for supporting young parents

Research studies in recent years have shown that young parents, and their children, are more likely than other families to suffer a series of negative outcomes both during and after pregnancy. These negative outcomes include: being at greater risk of health problems (physical and emotional) both during and after pregnancy; being more likely to suffer negative effects on their physical and emotional health than other children, e.g., low birthweight, higher infant mortality, increased incidents of childhood accidents, and, for daughters of teenage parents, increased likelihood of becoming teenage parents themselves. Teenage mothers are less likely to complete their education and training; they are more likely to rely solely on benefits than other parents; and for those who are not receiving benefits are more likely to be on low incomes or working in unskilled jobs.

Evidence shows that young parents have very different needs to older parents and that a targeted approach is needed to reach them (SEU 1999). Teenage parents should be offered specific services solely for them which are young-person centred, informal, accessible and drop-in sessions rather than appointment based (Children's Centres Guidance 2005). There is clear evidence that many young parents are keen to move into education, employment and training (EET) as they want to better provide for their child but there are serious barriers to this happening which need to be overcome (SEU 1999).

### 13.2 Outcomes in Hammersmith & Fulham

The Borough has a very strong and well-embedded teenage pregnancy strategy but despite having achieved impressive reductions in our teenage conception rates we still have relatively high rates. Each year around 50 births take place to mothers under the age of 18. The strategy has an element that seeks to offer appropriate support to young parents through a variety of initiatives. A review of services for young parents in the Borough by the Policy Unit was conducted in 2006 which documented the good practice and partnership working that exists but it was also recognised that there was an issue of capacity, given the high number of young parents in the Borough.

The Teenage Pregnancy Team provides support to reduce the social exclusion and improve the outcomes of young parents through their pregnancy, birth and back into EET. The support team is made up of a Reintegration Officer (who provides part-time support), Hestia Floating Support Worker (who has a caseload of 10 vulnerable cases) and 1.5 Teenage Pregnancy Connexions PA. It is widely recognised that the role they provide in supporting young parents and referring to more specialised services in areas such as housing, benefits, EET, poor mental health, domestic violence, etc. is invaluable. The local Review by the Policy Unit stated that the 'Outreach work (provided by the TP support team) was seen as the most successful way of reaching young parents, rebuilding their confidence, supporting them emotionally and encouraging them to access other services and return to education, and there has been considerable success in achieving this.' Currently the team has 119 referrals of young mothers aged 19 and under.

### 13.3 **Multi-agency working**

The team works closely with Children's Centres and the one-to-one young parents' midwifery team at Queen Charlotte's hospital that provides excellent early support to young parents. Documented evidence has demonstrated that this early support has contributed to reducing key risks both ante- and post-natally. The team also delivers in collaboration with partners a range of group work ranging from psycho-social groups and baby massage courses to more structured learning around personal development which are valuable stepping stones for young parents to reduce their social exclusion and move on into EET.

## 14. Parenting and Gangs: a preventative approach

- 14.1 In March 2007 a young man named Kodjo Yenga was fatally stabbed in Hammersmith and at the time of the writing of this strategy, a number of youths are on trial for his murder. In London as a whole, 26 young people were killed in shootings and stabbings in 2007 compared to 17 in 2006. The murder of all of these young people is of course an enormous loss for their families and friends and the publicity that has accompanied each death has raised a significant concern for the public about a rise in gang culture.
- 14.2 Public concern about gangs is entirely understandable although it can lead to a confusion about recorded trends in crime throughout London. Gun crime in London rose by 4% in 2007, but the overall number of crimes dropped for the fifth year in a row and overall crime fell by 6.1% compared to 2006, with the number of knife crimes down by 13% and the murder figures falling by nearly 7%. Nevertheless the Mayor of London acknowledged that "*There is a resistant problem of gang-related knife and gun crime involving young people.*" The Metropolitan Police also expressed its concern at the number of teenagers murdered in 2007 set against a backdrop of a fall in the overall number of murders from 222 in 2003 to 160 in 2007.
- 14.3 All agencies concerned with young people, with their safety as much as any aspect of their lives are keen to see that the true nature of gang activity is understood and that youth crime is correctly identified and understood. As a response to the murder of Kodjo Yenga, Hammersmith & Fulham Children's Services Department commissioned an independent report to look at the work, and awareness of, the Children's Services Department in relation to many of the young people involved in the murder - either as victims, possible perpetrators, friends or affiliates. From this an extensive action plan will lead to a wide-ranging set of responses for the Department and its partners.
- 14.4 Gang crime – and concern about gang crime, is not in itself new and much can be learned about what parents can do to familiarise themselves with the realities, do their best to minimise the likelihood of their children becoming involved in gangs, or support their young people to leave them. Gang activity has been studied in the USA for example and much learned about issues such as gang growth, female involvement with gangs, serious crime drugs and violence, and the needs of families, communities and young people who live in the presence of youth gangs.
- 14.5 Preventative strategies will often have as their first element a community-wide approach, followed on a second tier an approach to identified vulnerable groups or individuals. Parents can make a significant difference to the chances of their children being involved in gang activity by understanding the myths and realities and discussing the issue openly and honestly with their children.
- 14.6 As a response to concerns about gangs we want parents to be able to talk to their children and we will ensure that as this strategy is developed that

parents who are unsure of how to talk to their children can have access to parenting training. The available evidence about the best age to do this is still unclear, but there is some that suggests that gangs are targetting vulnerable children in years 5 and 6 in primary schools and that giving the right messages to parents is best done before this age, in years 3 and 4. For those parents who are concerned about the likelihood that their children are already involved we will provide more targeted support. All of this action will be done in an overall context of giving accurate and useful information to parents.

- 14.7 We will also ensure that when commissioning services for children that we address the needs of children and young people and we have access to preventative services and those that support front-line staff where an understanding of gang activity is vital.

## **15 Tier 3 and 4 services: supporting parents with more complex needs**

15.1 Families can find themselves overwhelmed with difficulties for many reasons and Children's Services and its partners wants to help and support those families. Most problems can be resolved by the professionals who know the child and its parents getting together with the family to establish a support package. Wherever possible and safe to do so the emphasis will be on supporting the family and a child protection approach will only be taken when a Common Assessment, Initial or Comprehensive Assessment shows that is the right course of action.

### **15.2 The Family Assist Service**

To support families where there is a very real risk of family breakdown, the department has for some time developed the role of the Family Assist service. It is a multi-disciplinary team intended to offer intensive support to families in crisis. We appreciate that at times some young people can behave in ways that are very trying for their parents, but the evidence is clear that for the very great majority of young people, their life chances will be significantly worsened by being looked-after by the local authority.

The service includes a respite fostering offer, PACT (Parents and Children Together) which can offer planned and emergency short breaks, without the need to accommodate children using carers skilled in this sort of intensive support.

To support parents of young people who may exhibit more challenging behaviour, a significant number of Assist staff have undertaken training in Triple-P and more will do so in 2008, including advanced-level training.

Using the Parenting Co-ordinator Service we intend that where resources will allow, Assist practitioners who are accredited in parenting skills training may put on parenting skills groups with practitioners in other more professionally isolated settings.

### **15.3 The Central and North-West London Mental Health Trust (CNWL) Substance Misuse Family Therapy Service**

This highly specialist service, commissioned for the first time in 2007 provides therapeutic interventions to families affected by the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Relationship problems can be intensified against a backdrop of dependency, and this service addresses family functioning and can support a normal parenting relationship that might otherwise be severely challenged.

The service is provided by specialists in this client group and provides a focus on family functioning rather than the safeguarding focus that is more usual with Children's Services.

### **15.4 The Education Welfare Advisory Service (EWAS)**

The Education Welfare Advisory Service is concerned with addressing severe truanting problems and to this extent works within the legal

framework to ensure that parents send their children to school. Developing parenting skills is a key aspect to better ensuring children's attendance by giving adults the skills and confidence to parent more effectively. Some parents may choose to enter into this voluntarily, but others will not do so, regardless of the benefits to them. The legislation makes available the choice of a voluntary Parenting Contract or a compulsory Parenting Order, on application to a court. Orders available to the local authority through the Education Welfare Advice service are via a power in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 and modified by the 2006 Education and Inspections Act.

In 2007 the EWAS worked with parents on 43 Parenting Contracts and 8 Parenting Orders. Parents are offered 6-session courses, usually singly rather than in groups with a specific focus on improving their child's attendance at school and records high levels of satisfaction in the service.

The EWAS also advises parents who choose to educate their children at home, an option which is entirely lawful and sometimes referred to as "Education Otherwise". In the borough this amounts to around 50 parents who choose to do this. A development that is being considered is to offer support in groups to this group of parents who would be isolated from all of the benefits of contact with a school.

#### **15.5 The Youth Offending Service (YOS)**

The YOS works with parents through its Early Intervention Service and through children and young people who have convicted of criminal or anti-social behaviour. Parents have Parental responsibility for their children to the age of 18 and remain a key influence on young people. YOS workers will seek to work positively and pro-actively with parents as a way of reducing the likelihood of further offending occurring, or of positively influencing younger siblings in the household who may be at risk of becoming involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour. The service will aim to see their service users as children first and offenders second and address their needs for boundaries and guidance like any other child.

As with the Education Welfare Service the YOS can engage with parents voluntarily or compulsorily, although the legal route is a different one. The origins of the "YOS" route are in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act modified by Section 24 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. Guidance to the 1998 CDA Orders was clarified in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

In 2007 the Youth Offending Service issued two Parenting Orders and no Parenting Contracts leaving this as an area to be developed. The service has had some setbacks in maintaining a consistent parenting resource and has begun in late 2007 and 2008 to develop a relationship with the north Fulham Family Welfare Association to provide this service.

#### **15.6 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

CAMHS is provided in the borough by West London Mental Health NHS Trust and provides a specialist support to parents and families as a whole

through the provision of family and individual therapies. Within the borough the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service consists of a clinic at Wolverton Gardens for children age 0-17 and their families and a variety of specialist practitioners either based in, or linked to other services. They may also make referrals to highly specialist services elsewhere in London as necessary. Over the last three years the CAMHS multi-agency partnership has developed a number of specialist practitioner posts in community multidisciplinary settings, working with young people, their parents and other professionals. Their aims include maintaining children in the community so that they are not referred to specialist services inappropriately.

Recent developments include additional provision for children with learning disabilities who also have mental health difficulties and new Primary Mental Health Worker posts, providing a much increased level of support to non-specialist primary care workers in health and social care, as well as schools.

CAMHS services are a key element of the resources available within the borough for families with complex needs where parents may have exhausted their own abilities to meet the needs of their children and the emotional well-being of the child(ren) and their family are at risk. They are also a significant source of support to other professionals through the frequent provision of consultation.

A challenge to be faced by the local authority and its partners is to ensure that vital services are adequately funded given the central government reduction in CAMHS Modernisation grant to Hammersmith & Fulham from 2008-09.

**Services offered:**

The service offers a range of therapies known to help children, young people and their families such as psychodynamic, systemic and cognitive and behavioural psychotherapy. Medication may also be prescribed when appropriate. The service is sensitive to the culture, race, language and religion of families and in the work we undertake. Interpreters are available for both assessments and treatment.

**Who the service is for:**

The service offers comprehensive assessment and treatment to 0-18 year olds and their family's resident in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. CAMHS is able to help with a range of behaviour, emotional or relationship problems shown by children and young people, from ordinary worries to severe disturbances.

**Referral information:**

Referrals are accepted from GPs, health visitors and other health professionals, social workers and schools. Referral forms can be faxed or sent when required. West London Mental Health Trust needs to know that a legally responsible adult (usually the parent/s) has consented to the referral.

**When to refer**

When a specialist mental health service is needed regarding concerns about the behaviour or emotional well being of a child or young person.

### 15. Summary table of types of Parenting Support and their provision in Hammersmith & Fulham

Methods	Aims	Provision in H&F
Providing information	To assist family members gain a level of knowledge that improves how they understand and deal with their circumstances	The Family Information Service, The Mag, H&F News, Extended Services information boards (in Schools), other leaflets, etc
Telephone Helplines and internet advice	To provide support and advice out of hours and direct callers to other relevant services	Information from a variety of sources including all of the above. Info also available on the Internet. The electronic directory of services to be developed in 2008
Befriending	To increase the social opportunities and contacts for family members and help them improve self-esteem and confidence	Family Friends working with parents of children under 5, befriending schemes for parents of disabled children
Advocacy	To assist people by giving them the confidence to ask questions and seek help and support that they may be entitled to	Various services. Mencap, funded by the local authority provide a post for families affected by a disabled child. The Play Association advocates on play issues. The Parents Forum established in 2008 is a platform for parents to engage with Children's Services officers at a senior level.
Respite	To give families the opportunity to get a break from a stressful situation, providing relief and opportunities for maintaining social contact	The local authority provides a respite service for families of disabled children at the Haven and there are current plans to extend the type of respite services on offer (e.g., home breaks), to encourage more families to use respite services. The PACT service linked to Family Assist provides respite for parents of children whose behaviour threatens family stability. Within the VCS the charity Breakaway offers very low priced holidays for families in need.
Parenting Skills	To improve communication, boundaries and trust between family members	<b>Described in detail further in this paper.</b> A developing agenda for H&F with the aim of being offered across the

		Children's Service and partners.
Coping Skills	To improve the emotional well-being of family members and improve their capacity to support each other	West London Action for Children (WLAC) provide groups to work on "family togetherness"
Family Support Groups	For families to collectively support each other and benefit from common difficulties they may be facing. This might also include supporting refugee groups to encourage their participation and minimise social exclusion	This form of support goes by different names in different settings. Across the borough our providers provide support for example to parents of teenagers, parents of disabled children, etc. The Adoption Buddy Support scheme is a further example
Family Therapy	To work with the whole family to improve overall functioning. There may be a member with an identified "problem".	Wolverton Gardens CAMHS clinic (WLMHT) and WLAC provide family therapy in the borough. CNWL adult services provide a specialist service for families affected by substance misuse
Counselling and individual therapy	To help family members come to terms with particular issues, to allow them to explore concerns and identify ways of dealing with and responding to their concerns	For children and young people, individual counselling is available through Wolverton Gardens, although the clinic takes a systemic and whole-family approach. Many schools are developing counselling services, linked to both the CAMHS Strategy on supporting non-specialist services, and the Extended Services programme. Adult counselling is available through the NHS providers and West London Centre for Counselling
Well-baby clinics	Parents of young children have access to qualified health professionals through well-baby clinics.	100 clinics are held each month by health visitors. Their function is to prescribe for a range of conditions and provide advice, guidance, treatment and reassurance for parents on child and parent-related matters, (developmental assessment/health issues- breast feeding, smoking, vitamins & weaning, sleep, immunisations, accident prevention, sexual health, minor ailments, dental and dietary advice, preconceptual

		advice, local information about services)
Parental support sessions	Parents of young children are able to access qualified advice and guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) post-natal depression</li> <li>b) breast-feeding, weaning, and diet</li> <li>c) child behavioural management</li> </ul>	Health visitors hold 25 groups a month (both closed and drop-in groups)
Perinatal mental health service for mothers	Tier 3 mental health service for women, providing interventions for women with mental health problems so that they can best function as parents	Central and North West London Mental Health Trust provide this service to new and expectant mothers at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
Specialist inpatient mental health treatment for mothers	Tier 4 specialist inpatient treatment for women suffering from mental health problems after the birth of a baby. The unit also assesses and treats parenting difficulties.	Coombe Wood Unit (CNWL) provides a comprehensive medical and psychological assessment and treatment of each mother's mental health problem, while supporting and promoting the care of her infant
Teenage Pregnancy Mother and baby unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital offer a young mum's 121 midwifery service. A team of 6 midwives offer continuous support to young parents throughout the maternity episode.</li> <li>• A baby massage worker offers 1:1 sessions for parents experiencing difficulties with bonding or postnatal depression (on a referral basis only from midwives or caseworkers).</li> <li>• Bump 2 baby postnatal groups held at Children's Centre Cathnor Park and Fulham Cross Youth Club.</li> <li>• Pilot of "Hit the ground crawling" peer mentor programme</li> <li>• Pilot of young father's postnatal group.</li> </ul>	

## 17. Summary of action to support the Parenting Strategy

### Tier 1: Information, advice and participation

#### At Tier 1 we are working to:

- Ensure that parents have easy access to information about resources that is clear and relevant to their needs
- Ensure that we have the forums for parents to meet with senior officers and express their views on how services are performing and should be developed
- Ensure that we have an adequate supply of practitioners who have the right skills, accreditation and support to work with parents
- Develop high-quality parent training using the Triple-P method as the preferred model. Make training as inviting, unthreatening and easy-to-access as possible.
- Ensure that we have borough-wide provision of universal services that any parent can access in Children's Centres and Extended Services for Schools
- Develop parenting support as part of the "Core Offer" of Extended Services for Schools

#### What we have to do

- We are significantly expanding the number of staff in health, social care, schools and voluntary sector agencies who are trained and accredited in a recognised model of parenting skills training. This will be underpinned by a thorough analysis of where need is, matched to the areas, services and school clusters where the evidence show that there is a need to develop more practitioner resources.
- The parenting programme we offer will usually be the Positive Parenting Programme, also known as Triple-P which we are promoting as the preferred method of parenting skills training in H&F but we will not overlook other trainings that are relevant and complement the skills of practitioners. We will then support practitioners in achieving accreditation from the government-sponsored National Academy of Parenting Practitioners.
- The Parenting Co-ordinator Service that we have commissioned from the local voluntary sector will provide a single email and telephone number for parents to make enquiries to when they want information. We will also develop a range of printed information for families and professionals about what is on offer in the borough and ensure that it is widely available.
- We will also be developing with the provider of the Parenting Co-ordinator Service a quality assurance system so that parents can be sure of the quality of the parenting skills training that is on offer to them and know where to go to if they have any comments or complaints about the service they have received.

- We will use our Parenting Co-ordinator Service to identify groups of parents who we are not reaching with parenting training and find better ways of letting them know what is on offer.
- Develop other forms of support for parents who choose not to access parent training, including peer or volunteer-based support
- We are in the process of transforming the Children's Information Service (CIS) giving information on a range of under-5's services into a Family Information Service for under 18's (and under 21's in the area of disability). This will be underpinned by a comprehensive web-based directory of services.
- Extended Services have placed noticeboards on services available in every school. We need to develop this further to address other places where parents can readily access information.
- We will further develop the Parents Forum for parents who are already active in representing parents' issues such as school parent governors. The Forum will consider and comment on Children's Services plans and proposals on a whole range of issues including how we support parents living in the borough. We will incorporate their views on the development of this strategy and in the commissioning of services.
- Establish the Parenting Co-ordinator Service and hold a formal launch with widespread marketing.
- Triple-P (the Positive Parenting Programme) has been heavily invested in as the preferred method of parent training. Triple-P was initially developed in Australia and has the advantage of a thoroughly evidenced research base to demonstrate its effectiveness. The Parenting Strategy Group will ensure the completion of an audit of the need for accredited parenting practitioners across the borough and locate the resources to establish training programmes, as well as supports to parenting skills trainers.
- The training programme for staff has been made possible through the Early Years Service and it will make a significant contribution to developing a "borough standard" training programme in Triple-P. There is an outstanding need to train staff in Extended Services for Schools.
- Develop quality assurance methods for all parent training activity across the borough, as a responsibility of the Parent Co-ordinator Service
- The relationship between parenting and achievement is clear. All agencies should take active steps to encourage parents' involvement in their learning and development. The Extended Services programme can act as a means of broadening parents' involvement in schools for those who are less comfortable in their engagement with schools.

- Cluster groups being developed for Extended Services, with good linkages to Children's Centres and the voluntary sector will be the ideal forum for developing a dialogue on local need.
- Specific steps should be taken to involve fathers more in the everyday lives of their children, given the research base on the value of their contribution. In 2008 we will undertake a further audit of what efforts are being made specifically to engage with fathers and evaluate where there are any existing pockets of good practice. We will then use the available multi-agency meetings to develop practice and where necessary commission any specialist supports as resources allow.

## Tier 2: Additional support for families

### At Tier 2 we are working to:

- Use the Common Assessment Framework as a means of sharing information with parents and agencies that support families in a clear and open way
- Ensure that supports to families with additional needs are adequately resourced, that their referral pathways are clear and that the services are being marketed effectively. This includes parents of children with disabilities and young parents, parents affected by substance misuse, etc
- Ensure that “think family” approaches are being developed with Community Services
- Develop the parenting support offer of Extended Services for Schools.

### What we will have to do:

- Although not specifically concerned with parenting, the roll-out of the Common Assessment Framework will make a big difference to families shared participation in assessments of their needs and agreement on how and who with that is shared. As the number of CAF’s increases it will help us build-up a picture of the collective needs of parents for support which will inform how services are commissioned in the future
- Continue the training and roll-out programme of the Common Assessment Framework and Information-Sharing protocol as a safe means of sharing knowledge about parents and children with their permission.
- Ensure that “think family” approaches are being developed with Community Services. This is also referenced in plans to address Tier 3 services and indicates that needs stretch across the spectrum between the need for support and the need for protection.
- Develop screening tools backed by relevant training and protocols for front-line staff from all relevant agencies engaged with parents who have identified needs in addition to those of the child.
- Complete the development of the Children’s Centre Family Support Team and ensure that it forms effective partnerships with the Children’s centres, Teenage Pregnancy Team, Health Visitors and other support services.
- Ensure that there are sufficient Triple-P trained staff in Children’s Centres and other settings that provide supports to parents of children with some additional needs.
- In order to develop the early intervention and prevention agenda and help families before problems become unmanageable, we need a good range of support services, readily accessible and with information on how to find them readily available. There is scope to develop the market for Tier 2 services further, particularly through the Extended Services for Schools agenda. Further consultation with families needs to be undertaken in developing services to ensure that the right sorts of support are commissioned and obstacles to use are understood.

- We will use opportunities for the recommissioning of the Children's Fund and Voluntary Sector Main Grant Programme to align resources that support early intervention and prevention supports to parents.
- Ensure that we commission services that address gang-related activity in the borough.
- The Complex Needs Division and Children's Commissioning to ensure continued funding for the Adoption Buddy Support service.

### **Tier 3: Families with complex needs**

#### **At Tier 3 we are working to:**

- Develop the Family Assist service to reach all families with children aged 0 to 18 where the prevention of further family breakdown requiring a swift, multi-disciplinary response.
- Ensure that there are the right supports to families experiencing difficulties that threaten family stability, that they are adequately resourced and that professionals have simple and swift access to information and knowledge of referral processes
- Ensure that adequate resources are available for key services in Child and Adolescent mental health given the reduction in central government funding
- Develop a charging policy for certain Children's Services, with the aim of discouraging children from becoming accommodated where alternative packages of family support can be provided by Family Assist.

#### **What we will do:**

- Further develop the Family Assist service to support families in crisis. Ensure its practitioners have advanced level training in Triple P methods. Consider the case for supporting its work in preventing the accommodation of young people by a charging policy (subject to Cabinet approval).
- Services that support vulnerable families, including those affected by substance misuse issues, do not receive a level of referral which reflects their number in the community or the numbers of children where there are safeguarding concerns for the children. More must be done to understand the barriers to referrals and managed risk so that children can remain with their families where it is safe to do so and parents are encouraged to work with services.
- Where families are involved in child protection plans, a good outcome may be that the parents undergo parenting training to reduce the assessed level of risk where poor parenting skills are identified as an issue. The Contact and Assessment and Child Protection Teams should have ready access to services providing parenting training where an assessment shows that this would be a useful intervention.
- In 2008-09 the local authority received notice of a significant reduction in its CAMHS modernisation budget. The CAMHS Partnership Board will respond by identifying resources to support the developments in local services that have been achieved over the last 3 years and ensure that good value for money is obtained and funding given to those services that demonstrate both need and value given.
- We have a relatively new service to H&F in the CNWL Family Therapy Service for substance misusing families and the benefits of this service need to be monitored and its services appropriately publicised and resourced

- As encouraged by the “Think Family” approach from government, we need to maintain a focus on whole-family approaches where adults are affected by mental health and substance misuse problems, with the LSCB facilitating developments.
- Develop the Hidden Harm agenda and improve knowledge of the affects of substance misuse on children. Improve exchanges of information and knowledge of services between Children’s Services and Community (adults) Services. The Commissioning Team will make effective links to Standing Together, other voluntary sector providers and other statutory agencies concerned with Domestic Violence to ensure that the right services are commissioned and adequately funded.

## Tier 4: Statutory Intervention

### At Tier 4 we are working to:

- Develop robust and assertive responses to the most challenging families who are unwilling or unable to co-operate.
- Continue to support services working with families either requiring multidisciplinary / multiagency services, or those requiring statutory services to safeguard either their children or the community who may be affected by their actions.
- Use the legal powers available to support work with parents who are unwilling to co-operate.
- Provide useful support services to families whose children are on the Child Protection Register with the aim of facilitating their de-registration and avoiding re-registration.

### What we will do:

- As a small London borough, Hammersmith & Fulham has relatively very small numbers of very anti-social families who are known to and cause operational problems to a wide range of services. Typically they may have difficulties in managing tenancies and so be faced with homelessness, they may be unable to behave collectively in a socially responsible way and so face eviction or individual members be faced with legal action. Solutions are often complex and expensive and indicate a need for an inter-borough commissioning solution. We will use the multi-agency mechanisms available to ensure that the council's "cracking down on crime" policies are effectively pursued.
- We will develop the use of Parenting Orders and Parenting Contracts to engage with the parents of children who are convicted of anti-social or criminal activity and ensure an adequate funding of preventative services to lessen the likelihood of such behaviour. We will benchmark information in comparable authorities and analyse evidence on the barriers to making greater use of these mechanisms.
- Beyond the use of Parenting Contracts and Orders we want to ensure that parents who are engaged with the Youth Offending Service (whether at Tier 4 or below) receive good support to enable them to effectively parent their young people.
- We will use the outcomes of the research on the needs of and services offered to families whose children are on the Child Protection Register to review whether the right services are being commissioned and whether front line staff are aware of them and know how to refer to them. We will actively seek feedback from both social work staff and families to inform whether the right services are being invested in.