



Hammersmith & Fulham

EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGY

2022-2027



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Pledge

We are ambitious for our children, young people, and families, which is reflected in our Early Intervention Strategy. It represents our commitment as a local area to create a system of early intervention which puts all children, young people, and their families first. We will work together to respond to emerging needs and reshape the way in which we plan, implement, and deliver services in Hammersmith & Fulham so that families receive the support they need when they need it.

The evidence base for providing support when a problem first emerges is extensive. Research suggests that by working together early support protects children from harm, reduces referrals to child protection services, and improves child and parent outcomes to strengthen families.

This cannot be achieved in isolation. We believe it takes a whole borough to raise a child. Therefore, to support children and young people to achieve, we must take a holistic approach by working together as a whole system to tackle barriers to their success, particularly where there are multiple and complex needs, to stop problems escalating and to improve life chances.

As a borough, we commit to being ruthlessly inclusive. Hammersmith & Fulham is one of London's most diverse places to live. We delight in that diversity – in the value added to our community by the differences in culture, nationality, colour and creed. Through implementing this strategy, we will lean into our communities to ensure all children, regardless of their background, have the same pathway of opportunities available to them.

This strategy is vital in this context to bring key partners together in Hammersmith & Fulham to deliver our ambition that working together and at the earliest opportunity is everyone's responsibility. This will require us all to work together to develop our services and skills that will help us achieve our ambitions.



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Executive summary

This Early Intervention Strategy outlines our approach to working together to support all children, young people, and their families at the earliest opportunity from universal services through to targeted support where necessary.

Early intervention is support given to a child, young person, or family when a problem first emerges, and can be provided at any stage in their life. This includes support provided by universal and targeted support services before problems escalate to statutory or complex care, as well as specialist support provided as part of early intervention ahead of statutory or complex care support.

Through the implementation of this strategy, all partners commit to improved integrated and partnership working to ensure we have an effective whole system approach to create services which keep children safe, support them to thrive and ensure every child fulfils their potential.

Our vision centres around several partnership principles which all services locally are aware of, working towards and collaborating on to achieve. These principles are:

- **Outreach** - Our offer is inclusive and suitable, delivered through agile and outward reaching support where it is needed
- **Personalisation** - We treat each young person as a unique individual without judgement and personalise our services
- **Inclusion** - Our services commit to value and demonstrate our respect for diversity, and to reach into communities to deliver support in the right way for all families
- **Resilience** - Our services offer the right level of help, by the right professional, at the right time, to support families to build resilience and independence
- **Accessible** - Our service offer is clear and accessible for both families and partners, achieved through efficient and respectful communication
- **Collaboration** - Our services work closely with universal services and communities to increase their capacity to offer support to families at the earliest point
- **Targeted** - We target resources to those at risk of the poorest outcomes and work as a network of services to make every contact count; reducing referrals for social work intervention, and entry to care or criminal justice systems
- **Prevention** - All services will intervene early to protect and promote both physical, social and emotional wellbeing with children, young people and families
- **Learning** - As a partnership, our early intervention services commit to a culture of continuous learning through reflection of best practice and areas for improvement in evaluating our services.

Informed by this strategic approach, we will begin to move towards a family hub model. Family hubs provide a central access point for integrated services, with professionals working together through co-location, data sharing and a common approach to working with children, young people and families so that regardless of where a family is, they will be able to access the same offer of integrated support. In addition, we will be seeking to develop and expand on key working functions to support in embedding and unifying this work across our early intervention offer.

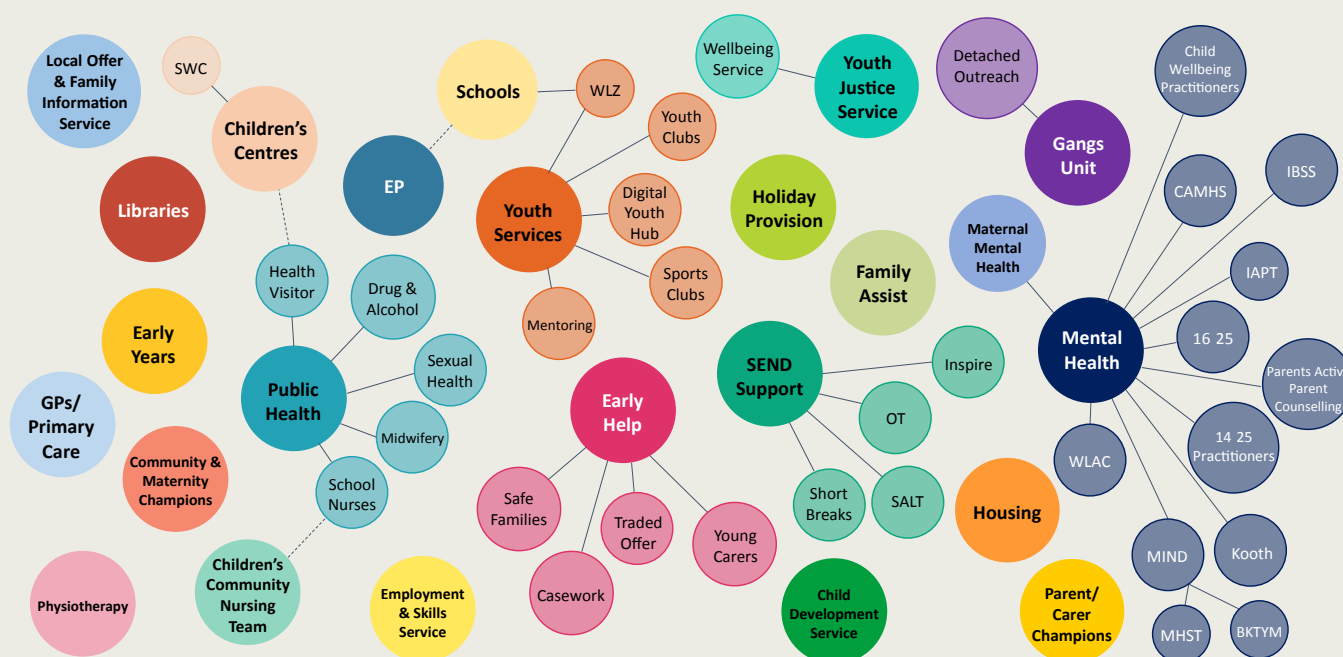
Welcome to our Early Intervention Strategy

We want to support families to thrive, to provide the best opportunities to live, work and play in the borough. Our ambition is to work together to support children, young people, and their families at the earliest opportunity from universal services through to targeted support where necessary. It is imperative for this approach to develop a strategy of partnership working, early intervention and inclusion to reshape the way in which we plan, implement,

and deliver services in Hammersmith & Fulham in collaboration with our partners, third sector providers, children, young people, and their families. Our Early Intervention Strategy will draw on these opportunities to transform outcomes for children and young people from pre-birth to 19 years old (up to 25 years old for young people with SEND) and their families in Hammersmith & Fulham.



What is early intervention?



Whilst many children, young people and families will only access universal services, sometimes additional support may be needed to ensure good outcomes. Early intervention is support given to a child, young person, or family when a problem first emerges, and can be provided at any stage in their life before problems become more complex.

Within this strategy, early intervention refers largely to our local network of universal and targeted support services, providing early

intervention before problems escalate to statutory or complex care. Additionally, we recognise that, for some areas, specialist support is provided as part of early intervention ahead of statutory or complex care support. For example, this includes early years speech and language therapy (SLT) for young children showing risks of longer-term speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) where early specialist support is indicated.

Our approach

We know that many factors shape a child's development, touching on all areas of our delivery. Therefore, to support children and young people to achieve, we must take a holistic approach to tackling barriers to their success, viewing the child, family and their circumstances as a whole and acknowledging the role we all play.

This is a three-stage process:

1. To describe what we currently deliver for children and young people, acknowledge any existing fragmentation and complexity, and move forward collaboratively to improve and maximise the offer
2. To arrive at a framework of integrated service provision that sits across the early intervention offer. This will directly inform development of H&F's family hub
3. Ongoing review and evaluation of our services and supports to ensure they are providing the best outcomes for children and young people in H&F.

We are strengthening our partnership approach to the delivery of early intervention across our borough. We will work in collaboration across the local authority, health services, community and voluntary sector and with residents to bring together our resources and expertise to better understand need and co-ordinate services effectively. This approach is echoed in the May 2022 'Independent Review of Children's Social Care' report which advocates a move towards a more simplified, responsible, respectful and effective whole system approach to helping families, rooted in identifying risks early and

preventing problems needlessly escalating. Our strategy adopts this partnership model to improve collaboration and reduce duplication by addressing needs early and supporting children and young people through positive interventions, from pre-birth to adulthood.

To implement our vision, we will adopt a whole system approach across the local area. Everyone in a child or young person's life has an important role to play in identifying and supporting their needs. Parents, carers, and others who form part of a child's daily routines and experiences know and understand the child best and are best placed to be able to make a real difference to support development and invoke positive changes. Adopting a whole system approach aims to draw the knowledge and support of specialist and targeted services into the community to support and develop the confidence of universal services and families by ensuring early intervention is everyone's business. Therefore, we want to move away from routine referrals and a reliance on targeted services towards a proactive, community based, tiered approach.

A number of our existing strategies and partnership working arrangements already take on this approach, demonstrating our clear shared vision. This strategy unifies this ambition in name and explains how we will move forward together to ensure children and young people receive the right support at the earliest possible opportunity.

What do we want for our children and young people?



We want our children, young people, and parents to:

- Be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitude to achieve their goals and aspirations
- Achieve strong social, emotional, and mental health
- Be physically well
- Be safe and feel safe
- Be confident, independent and resilient.

We want to embrace a vision and commitment to equality and inclusion for all our children and young people including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), working towards inclusion as business as usual (extending to all our children and young people, partners and stakeholders).

We want to empower all our young people to feel ambitious for their future, to give them the best possible career chances and business opportunities, and to give them opportunities to discover the areas where they can thrive. This thinking lies at the heart of our Industrial Strategy.

More focused strategies and implementation plans to meet these outcomes will be found in:

- Industrial Strategy
- SEND Action Plan
- Youth Crime Prevention Strategy
- Early Years Strategy
- Family Hubs Implementation Plan

Our shared vision

Every child, young person and family is happy, healthy and has the opportunity to thrive, supported by an effective community network.

This vision is embedded in our practice and demonstrated at each life stage through the following:

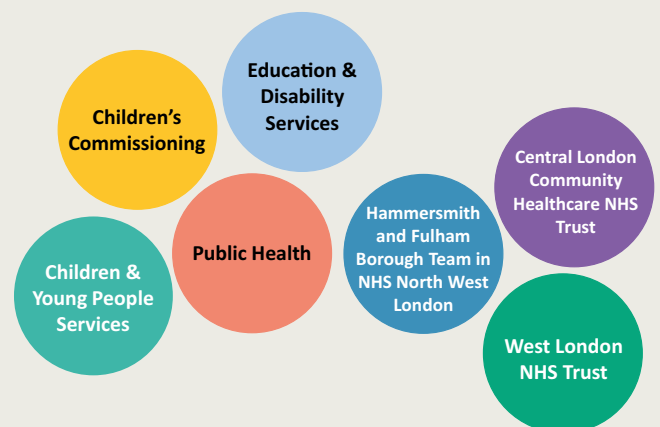
0-5 years: We want expectant mothers to benefit from good maternal health and accessible ante- and post-natal support, achieving good perinatal mental health to encourage effective child-parent attachment. During early years, we want babies and young children to be healthy, and develop secure attachments and early communication skills. We want all young children to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes of staying safe, enjoying, and achieving as they learn and develop.

5-11 years: At primary school age, we want children to develop to their full potential, to be mentally and physically healthy, and to be equipped to thrive as they grow.

11-16 years: We want our secondary age young people to be healthy, develop social skills and emotional resilience to prepare for adulthood, have realistic ambitions and understand the paths that will help them to accomplish these.

16+ years: Post-16, we want all of our young people to be equipped through high quality education and training to lead full, independent and active adult lives, supported by an inclusive local economy to help grow young people as future leaders. We are strongly committed to inclusion where all young people resident in the borough including those with SEND, vulnerable young people on the outskirts of education, care experienced children and young people and those known to the Youth Justice Service can participate in provision which will lead to that success.

Signed off by all members of the Hammersmith & Fulham Children's Commissioning Delivery Group / Children's Education, Health and Social Care Partnership Board





This strategy should be read in conjunction with the following key documents which give further detail to specific areas of focus across our delivery:

- Early Years Strategy
- North West London Integrated Care Programme Priorities
- Industrial Strategy

We are also working to develop the following strategies which provide additional detail in targeted areas:

- SEND Strategy
- Youth Crime Prevention Strategy

Continued monitoring of the implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the Children's Education, Health and Social Care Board.



How we developed the strategy

This strategy was jointly written with partners across H&F Council (children's services, public health, economy, community safety, housing, public health), West London NHS Trust, Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Team in NHS North West London, Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust, Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust, GPs, voluntary and community sector, schools, children, young people and families. A working group of key partners was formed to lead delivery of the strategy, supplemented by a series of workshops to understand the current challenges and how these can be addressed.

We have utilised existing feedback from children and young people gathered through our youth voice coordinator to ensure we are listening and responding to what our young people want across our services. We have also consulted with young people through a borough-wide survey asking about their experiences living in the borough, who/where they would go to for help, and what is important to them about how they receive support. Additionally, this strategy incorporates a number of other strategies which are currently in development, such as the SEND Strategy

and Youth Crime Prevention Strategy, which have been co-produced with parents, carers and young people. This strategy also adopts the guiding principles and purpose of the Youth Voice Strategy, committing to embed co-production to strengthen the reach and impact of youth voice in service design as 'business as usual'.



Where are we now?

Hammersmith & Fulham Council invest substantially in early intervention; providing an extensive range of early intervention services, delivered by multiple providers across multiple locations (children's centres, health centres, libraries, schools, community centres). Across our early intervention offer, there is some coordination between services; however, this is not consistent. Provision varies depending on location and pathways into services are often unclear.

Babies generally receive a good start in life in the borough: there is good breastfeeding uptake in the 75th percentile, only 2.2% of babies are born with a low birth weight, and low numbers of women who are smokers at the time of birth, at 2.8%. 74.5% of children living in the borough achieve a good level of development at the end of their reception year, at a higher rate than the London or England average of 71.5%, and despite pockets of deprivation, a significantly higher percentage of children and young people with free school meal status achieve a better level of development than average.

95% of schools in H&F are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. Our mainstream schools are skilled at meeting the needs of children with SEND, and where children require more specialist interventions, we have high quality specialist provision. After secondary school age, H&F have significantly fewer 16–18-year-olds not in employment, education or training, at 2.5% comparatively to the London average of 3.4%.

Reports of inter-agency working in H&F are mostly positive, and where they exist there are good structures in place to support multi-

agency working. There is a broad offer of local community mental health support delivered in partnership by social care services, NHS, schools and the voluntary and community sector. Our children's centres are partially integrated with perinatal mental health services, community midwives, and health visiting services who work with our maternity champions to support mothers both ante- and post-natal. Additionally, health visiting and school nursing services operate online, from schools, homes, early years settings, and GP surgeries.

Despite these strengths, there are a number of areas for further development. Within H&F, 25.6% of dependent children and young people under 16 are living in poverty. This amounts to 4,599 children under 16 living in absolute poverty, and 5,831 in relative poverty. Compared to elsewhere, H&F has poor uptake of childhood immunisations at approximately 80%, and high rates of tooth decay in children under 5 at 28.3% compared to the national average of 23.4%. In addition, almost a third of state primary school age children are overweight or obese. Further, there are some inconsistencies in the access to Maternity Champions across the borough.

The borough is one of the most densely populated areas in the country. There is limited affordable housing, and demand for social and affordable housing outstrips supply. Approximately 73% of housing stock is flats or maisonettes with a limited number of family sized homes, resulting in 12% of households classed as overcrowded. As a result, people requiring larger properties or ones which meet necessary accessibility features have limited

opportunity. All of these characteristics can exacerbate pre-existing health and wellbeing issues and our ability to address them.

The Early Intervention Foundation found that our maternity and early years provision is between 'Basic Level' and 'Early Progress', characteristic of local areas that have made a commitment to take actions and are in the early stages of developing their programme but are still to confirm some elements of the approach they will take. There is an enthusiasm and drive to bring services together in Hammersmith & Fulham, and a recognition that strategic join up across the borough will create opportunities for strong multi-agency working, service alignment, and redesign where needed, although there are capacity and governance challenges.

There is a lack of professional understanding of appropriate referral routes into available support particularly with regards to mental health support. There has been a noticeable increase in children and young people presenting to A&E in crisis, particularly during hours where community support isn't accessible. This is compounded by the lack of comprehensive and consistent intervention and intensive outreach to prevent escalation of need. These challenges are acknowledged across the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP, soon to be Integrated Care Board), and a delivery plan to tackle these barriers is under development jointly between the council, Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Team in NHS North West London and West London NHS Trust in the spirit of the ICP.



We have seen a growing number of education, health and care plans (EHCPs) since 2018 (a growth of 33% from 1,113 to 1,480) which has led to pressure upon resources, and the council is investing in additional resources and partnership work to meet demand. We are also working to ensure sufficiency of provision once a child has an EHCP. There is a need to strengthen the offer for children with social, emotional and mental health needs as well as autistic spectrum condition and SLCN. We are also keen to clarify best practice in mainstream schools for all pupils with SEND so that we help children and young people develop independent learning and life skills.

By better integrating staff and embedding partnership arrangements, we will continue to address these areas for development, working to shift the culture around early intervention to one of firmly shared ownership. The Children's Education, Health and Social Care Partnership Board and ICP Executive Board are established and helping to further strengthen partnership working. Strategic oversight and direction by these boards will remain in place to ensure continued commitment to the strategic ambitions outlined in this strategy.



What are our children and young people telling us?

To help inform the development of this strategy, we launched an online consultation for young people in partnership with the youth council, receiving a total of 550 responses. The first question focused on what was good about being a young person in H&F. The word cloud (right) shows the responses received, with friends, community assets and educational settings the most popular response.

Young people were then asked what could be improved. As evidenced below right, crime and public safety, alongside environmental issues, ranked highly in young people's responses. This strategy will link with the council's ambition to be the greenest borough in Europe.

Young people were also asked who they would go to when they realised they needed help. Family, friends, and school were the highest-ranking responses, however very few young people responded that they would seek support from a GP, and even less from youth clubs. In explaining these responses, young people said they didn't know enough about services so would not be comfortable accessing them, or that services were not accessible or effective. Additionally, young people said that family and friends are familiar, personal, and easy to access compared to youth clubs which are not easy to access and lack stability.

To further explore some of the key themes raised, we utilised existing feedback collated by our youth voice coordinator to ensure our strategy listened and responded to what young people had already told us.



Safe spaces

Young people spoke highly of a need for safe spaces in the borough, with most young people interviewed by the Young Hammersmith & Fulham Foundation (YHFF) saying they felt unsafe in spaces such as in playgrounds and parks, as a result of gangs and gang violence, knife crime and local incidences of violent offences.

YHFF also found that two thirds of young people were largely unaware of how to access local youth services. However, young people who knew how to access local youth services were twice to three times as likely to know what good mental health was and were three times as likely to believe that there was good support for mental health in the borough. This demonstrates the demand for effective local universal services for children and young people in support of a strengthened early intervention approach.

Emotional and mental health

The close link between strong emotional and mental wellbeing and resilience has been particularly heightened during the pandemic, with H&F Healthwatch and the Youth Council finding that a third of young people said their mental health had worsened during the lockdowns. One in three young people have not found information on how to get help, and two in five said they had a negative or mixed experience in contacting someone for support. This demand is also felt in the early years, with greater access to community mental health

services being the most requested service by parents and carers accessing our children's centres, particularly by families with very young children. Additionally, family support are increasingly supporting young people with emotional based school attendance issues due to difficulties with emotional and mental health.

Employment

In conversation with young people at secondary phase, concerns about employment, apprenticeships, training opportunities and career advice emerged strongly. This was echoed strongly through our Speak Out Group, a virtual, young people's advisory group for young people with SEN, including those with EHCPs and SEN support. The current focus of the group are pathways to independence, in particular work experience and employability skills, demonstrating the importance of this topic for all young people. These concerns were particularly heightened following the COVID pandemic, with a high proportion of young people worried that it would have a negative impact on their education and employment. In recognising employment as a key concern for young people, the local authority alongside local business partners launched 'Let's Go EET', an event bringing young people, employers and training providers together to make careers opportunities accessible to all young people. This event builds on our ambitious Industrial Strategy which aims to build an economy which supports everyone to thrive. Similarly, many young people spoke positively about support provided through mentors, offering help through guidance and someone to talk to for direction.

How will we deliver our vision?

Delivery of our vision is based on a number of agreed partnership principles. These principles together form a responsive and dynamic framework of integrated service provision that sits across our early intervention offer which all services locally are aware of, working towards and collaborating on to achieve.

Principle	
OUTREACH	Our offer is inclusive and suitable, delivered through agile and outward reaching support where it is needed
PERSONALISATION	We treat each young person as a unique individual without judgement and personalise our services
INCLUSION	Our services commit to value and demonstrate our respect for diversity , and to reach into communities to deliver support in the right way for all families
RESILIENCE	Our services offer the right level of help, by the right professional, at the right time , to support families to build resilience and independence
ACCESSIBLE	Our service offer is clear and accessible for both families and partners, achieved through efficient and respectful communication
COLLABORATION	Our services work closely with universal services and communities to increase their capacity to offer support to families at the earliest point
TARGETED	We target resources to those at risk of the poorest outcomes and work as a network of services to make every contact count; reducing referrals for social work intervention, and entry to care or criminal justice systems
PREVENTION	All services will intervene early to protect and promote both physical, social and emotional wellbeing with children, young people and families
LEARNING	As a partnership, our early intervention services commit to a culture of continuous learning through reflection of best practice and areas for improvement in evaluating our services

Outreach

Our local services commit to work towards an offer of early intervention which is inclusive and suitable, delivered through agile and outward reaching support where it is needed and appropriate.

This approach reframes the way we think of our services by moving away from providing information to families and advancing towards listening and responding to families' behaviours, attitudes, and concerns through an inward reaching approach.

What do we want to achieve?

- Services are compassionate and responsive by shaping outreach efforts in light of families' cultural perspectives that may influence when, where, and how they access support
- Specialist services have easier access into communities to share their expertise, encourage peer to peer sharing of good practice and provide support.

What we will do

All Age

- We will develop the role of our Community and Maternity Champions to deliver messages of support around healthy lifestyles, change unhealthy behaviours and improve health and wellbeing of the local population across the borough
- We will draw on our local libraries network to improve the reach of our services within the community, drawing on the success of our libraries as safe spaces which are accessed by a larger footfall than would access services traditionally



- We will develop a single strategy and plan for SEN sufficiency that is inclusive of outreach provision and will support a holistic review of our local offer and alternative provision arrangements using a process of co-production. This will form part of our SEND Strategy
- We will increase the use of digital services to supplement provision, building on the good learning post-COVID and helping expand service awareness amongst children, young people and families who may otherwise be unaware of the local offer
- We will offer outreach to children and families from our family support service including parenting and one to one intervention, linking with universal services with the purpose of empowering families and ensuring inclusion within their communities.

School Age

- We will work with our voluntary and community sector to support the promotion of quality mentoring opportunities for all young people, including those who do not typically engage with our current provision.

Personalisation

Our local services commit to treat each child, young person and family as a unique individual without judgement, and to personalise our services to ensure service users receive the support they need.

What do we want to achieve?

- Children, young people, parents and carers are engaged in developing services to meet their needs
- A collaborative approach to assessments and treatments that are personalised to the needs of the child or young person.

What we will do

All Age

- Within family support, we will work alongside our partners to understand the needs of the community and will tailor our intervention according to needs identified, considering systemic ideas around disproportionality and equality
- We will continue to promote person-centred planning that puts children and young people at the centre of planning and decisions that affect them to ensure they are active partners in change

- We will support and empower all children and young people to be co-producers, so they can actively participate to ensure outcomes are wide ranging and across a broad range of cultural pursuits. This work, and the following bullet points, will be explained in more detail in our SEND Strategy
- We will strengthen the young person's voice in their own transition planning
- Our CAMHS service will move towards a tier-less service model, which is needs-led, placing the voice of children, young people and families at the centre of decision making.

Age 16+

- We will ensure post-16 services are commissioned effectively, based on early identification of likely need for support and young people's life/career plans.



Inclusion

We know that some communities in our borough do not access the support that is available, creating a persistent lack of equitable opportunity. A large barrier preventing engagement is that our services are not aligned to, promoted or delivered in ways that are culturally responsive. Our services commit to value and demonstrate our respect for diversity, and to reach into communities to deliver support in the right way for all families to encourage greater engagement. Our approach adopts inclusion in its widest sense, including children and young people with SEND, behaviour that challenges, care experienced children and young people and low-income families.

What do we want to achieve?

- Services are able to support and uplift those who do not typically access services, in a way that best suits their views, needs and lifestyles
- All children and young people to have a voice in the issues affecting them.

What we will do

All Age

- We will apply a youth-centred approach to practices, policies and procedures by adopting the purpose and principles of inclusive youth voice outlined in the H&F Youth Voice Strategy, and actively seek the involvement of youth voice so that those who are less likely to engage are encouraged to
- We will undertake a review of our SEN provision to determine sufficiency of current and future needs. The review will develop a SEN Placement Sufficiency Strategy that promotes inclusion and early intervention through a graduated response

- We will continue to support children, young people and their families with special educational needs and/or disabilities through activities, information and support delivered by the Stephen Wiltshire Centre. To continue to develop this offer, the centre will form a specialist hub as we move towards a family hub model
- We will continue to grow the parent/carer network to build on existing links with Somali community organisations
- We will implement the Youth Justice Service Disproportionality Action Plan which commits the partnership to taking concerted action to reducing the over-representation of black young males as both victims and perpetrators of serious youth crime.

Age 0-5

- We will work with our early years providers to develop an inclusion support offer to ensure all children and young people are supported to develop and achieve their full potential.

School Age

- We will develop an early intervention approach to meeting speech, language and communication needs including the creation of a new joint communication team. As we adapt to an ongoing COVID world, we know there are increased deficits in speech, language and communication, impacting on behaviour and inclusion in mainstream settings
- We will work with our partner agencies to ensure all young people are able to access and positively benefit from early emotional wellbeing and mental health interventions, and other forms of community-based support, creating targets to address under-represented groups accessing services to increase access to those specific groups.

Resilience

Our services commit to offer the right level of help, by the right professional, at the right time, to support families to build resilience and independence. Our services will operate collectively as a revolving door of support to build independence rather than dependency.

What do we want to achieve?

- Parents and carers are confident in their parenting skills and managing life in a positive way
- Babies' emotional needs are met through strong parental attachment
- Children's development and attainment is supported
- Children and young people are able to adapt well to adversity, manage feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, and overcome hardship.

What we will do

All Age

- We will continue to work with our Front Door colleagues and partners to ensure that all agencies are aware of the universal and specialist services available to support families in need without the need for council intervention
- We will build a family support service that is able to support families in building/empowering families through targeted interventions so that they feel able to progress through stages within their lives that may cause difficulties.



Age 0-5

- We will develop a joint area approach across our early years settings, including nurseries, play group and children's centres, to collectively agree the key priority areas of focus and embed targeted intervention across all settings. This will address the increase in SLCN presenting in younger children due to the impact of isolation through the COVID pandemic
- We will continue to progress our Early Years Strategy to encourage greater take up of funded two-year-old childcare provision
- We will build on our existing Early Years Strategy, working with health partners, residents and local businesses, adopting an early intervention approach from pre-birth to five
- We will work to upskill health visitors and Maternity Champions through parenting skills sessions to increase family resilience.



School Age

- We will upskill parents/carers and professionals on strategies to support emotional based school avoidance, and support schools to provide specialist support to facilitate reintegration following high rates of non-attendance and elective home education post COVID
- We will work with schools to make behaviour policies more inclusive, supporting the continued roll out of trauma-informed training to support children and young people who suffer with trauma or mental health problems and whose troubled behaviour acts as a barrier to learning
- We will take forward the learning from the Family Support Transition and Resilience Programme to improve the transition between primary and secondary school, focusing on improved coordination and earlier engagement for vulnerable families.

Age 16+

- We will ensure the new 16-25 mental health young people's service is implemented locally across child and adult agencies (including the third sector) and offers young people the most appropriate individual journey to receive the right support through a robust offer of early intervention, school and community support, group and peer support and specialist mental health support when needed.

Accessible

Our service offer is clear and accessible for both families and partners, achieved through efficient and respectful communication, to support children and young people to thrive.

We know that our local offer of early support is fragmented and complex, making it difficult to understand for both service users and partners. Clarity of thresholds is seen as a large challenge, alongside the ability for services to communicate and share information. As a result, there is a lack of professional understanding of appropriate referral routes into available support, and service users frequently report that our offer is inaccessible and difficult to navigate. To address these challenges, our services commit to communicate in an efficient and respectful way to improve partnership working. Through working in this manner, we will ensure our services work in partnership to support the family or young person holistically beyond their service focus.

What do we want to achieve?

- Children, young people and families are empowered to be independent
- Both professionals and service users have a clear understanding of what support is available in the locality and are able to navigate the appropriate pathways easily.

What we will do

All Age

- We will develop a Children's Charter as a guiding principle for everything we do across the council
- We will develop a directory of services in the local area so that service users understand what mental health support is available. This will also be suitable for professionals to support signposting and referrals as well as identifying areas of existing joint working and where this can be expanded upon. To develop this, we will consult with young people and families to understand how they want to access and receive information
- We will align our family information service with our local offer platform and work with local parents to develop a more responsive, easily accessible and useful resource for families using this website
- Through our Family Support service, we will ensure that we are able to reach families needing early intervention by engaging them in their homes or in the community when they struggle to access our services.

Age 0-5

- It is our ambition to integrate maternity, midwifery and council early years and health visiting services to ensure there are valuable connections and information sharing across key partners.



School Age

- We will ensure education, health and care needs assessments are undertaken by the local area within statutory timescales and that plans are of a consistent quality and standard with a joint agency approach to ensure that assessments address these three areas equally.

Age 16+

- We will establish an agreed process for joint strategic planning between children's and adult services with a multi-agency approach, which will be further outlined in our SEND Strategy
- We will ensure the transition process is coordinated, systematic and consistent
- We will ensure integrated multi-agency health transition plans and pathways are in place, led by development of a SEND Strategy.

Collaboration

Our services across the early intervention partnership work closely with universal services and communities to increase their capacity to offer support to families at the earliest point. This includes supporting specialist services to share learning, for example, through upskilling practitioners to deliver speech, language and communication support.

The partnership will adopt a whole system approach to maximise collaboration, which will centre around:

- Developing a culture of professional trust that engages partners in shaping, agreeing on and being accountable for delivery of our vision
- Identifying and (where necessary) investing in joint training needs to ensure that all partners are working to a shared approach for early intervention
- Aligning, as much as possible, partners' reporting and information management systems
- Unlocking the potential of our local community by ensuring that professionals providing early intervention know what local providers have to offer
- Investing in local community projects that build sustainability rather than dependence.

We will learn from the approach of our speech, language and communication colleagues by building and encouraging communication between those people who spend most time around the child or young person.

This means:

- Ensuring links across the continuum of universal and targeted services, including schools, health visiting, children centres and youth services and GPs
- Embedding the shared commitment that communication is everyone's business, and
- Working collaboratively and creatively to use daily routines and experiences to support that young person's development.

By integrating our universal and more targeted resources we hope to reduce the understandable tendency on the part of parents and professionals to often seek specialist support for needs that could be addressed by effective, joined up work within our universal offer. Where a child or young person's needs require a brief period of more specialist intervention that will of course be available through the relevant, jointly funded service.

What do we want to achieve?

- Children, young people, families and partners are able to easily access and understand the support offer available locally
- Partners work together to share information, prevent duplication and overlap, and ensure needs are met appropriately at the first point of contact
- Universal and community settings are empowered to support children and young people with emerging needs where these needs can be appropriately addressed in the community, reducing reliance on specialist and targeted referrals.

What we will do

All Age

- The partnership will adopt a 'what works' approach to ensure services are driven by evidence, for example, developing the role of our Maternity Champions to provide peer breastfeeding support which has a known impact on maternal mental health, long term physical health and attachment
- We will develop a whole-system approach to supporting early identification including strengthening the early identification of social communication difficulties; developing training for the early years sector to increase capacity in meeting needs of children with predictable needs and strengthening support to families awaiting assessment.
- Our social care services will work in partnership with voluntary and community services to embed whole-family working to improve shared decision making and family-led solutions. This includes fathers and paternal family members where involvement in intervention may be impacted by cultural beliefs
- We will build on the positive experiences of other local authorities through the development and measured expansion of a key worker model to deliver early interventions, accessing advice/contacting services on behalf of young people on issues young people present with
- We will develop the maturity of our early intervention system locally, through our supporting families programme, ensuring services are aligned with data on local need to achieve successful family outcomes through embedded whole family working



- We will continue to encourage and support collaborative partnerships based around GP practice population
- We will work in the spirit of the Hammersmith Health and Care Partnership to ensure that the early intervention offer maintains and improves effective working links with, and shares information across, local GP networks.



Age 0-5

- We will develop an offer of affordable childcare for residents by exploring opportunities to work with local businesses to address the recruitment challenges in identified industries. We will also work with our existing early years providers to improve take up of existing provision, informed by the findings of the childcare sufficiency assessment and consultation with parents.

School Age

- We will support our school network to ensure they have the right skills to identify needs quickly and put in place appropriate SEN support
- We will work with schools and local businesses to equip children and young people with the skills, technology and opportunities to take advantage of green careers and future technology, particularly in the STEM industries
- We will develop a partnership board to bring together schools and mental health professionals, creating an inter-agency forum to critically reflect on exiting practice and share best practice
- In family support, we will continue to work with our schools to increase our outcomes from our traded offer so that concerns do not escalate, and our children continue to receive support in a holistic manner
- We will work with local businesses and our partners through section 106 arrangements and social value commitments to develop engagement, learning and economic opportunities for all children and young people.

Targeted

We will target resources to those at risk of the poorest outcomes and work as a network of services to make every contact count; reducing referrals for social work intervention, and entry to care or the criminal justice system.

What do we want to achieve?

- Children and young people feel like part of their community, are supported to engage with positive activities and are diverted from the criminal justice system
- Our early intervention makes a meaningful contribution to the reduction of health and achievement inequalities across H&F
- Services that support those most in need operate in an integrated way and share information quickly and effectively

What we will do

All Age

- We will continue to safeguard children and young people, especially those in care, those with mental health issues or learning difficulties, to identify and address emerging issues by building on the close working relationship between the Police, children's services and schools. We are currently developing our Youth Crime Prevention Strategy which will give further examples of this joint working, and the following actions
- We will ensure we are working with the right children within the children in need and child protection frameworks. When support is required, we will work in partnership with children and their parents/carers to develop their plans, ensuring support into independence and universal services

- We will strengthen joint working between the Youth Justice Service and wider children's services and community services to develop clear targets, processes and practices that support desistance and use whole family approaches to reduce offending
- We will develop a cross-council policy to provide joined up support for families experiencing housing issues to prevent escalation and potential eviction due to extra familial harm, crime and anti-social behaviour. In doing so, we will work towards an early alert system to provide preventative interventions to achieve better outcomes for families.

School Age

- We will ensure our vulnerable children are supported through the transition between primary and secondary school by developing a 'passport' to ensure key information is transferred, needs are recognised, and appropriate support is put in place.

Age 16+

- We will work with schools to improve the tracking of student destinations post-16 to reduce numbers of 'unknown' young people. Further, we will work with community organisations already providing support to identify and engage this cohort, to ensure all young people have access to the support they need to be successful in adulthood
- Similarly, we will ensure schools are engaging with young people with SEN early to understand young people's intentions post-16 and appropriately identify any continuing support needs

- We will build on the success of the 'Let's Go EET' event by working with local employers to understand and implement targeted approaches to support vulnerable young people, preventing further marginalisation by enabling integration into the workforce
- We will maintain our low NEET numbers for young people known to the Youth Justice Service by working to expand available pathways, reaching out to offers available in the community, as well as linking into the Inclusive Employment Group to ensure equity of opportunities. These actions continue to support our vision for inclusive economic growth, outlined in our Industrial Strategy.



Prevention

All services will intervene early to protect and promote both physical and mental health and wellbeing with children, young people and families.

What do we want to achieve?

- Young people are able to make positive decisions to safeguard themselves and their peers in the community
- Family needs are supported early without the need for avoidable further or repeat intervention. We acknowledge that some families may need a continuum of support over time to ensure wellbeing and prevent escalations
- Children and young people can make informed choices about their health and wellbeing
- Children, young people and families are aware of and have access to wellbeing resources within our borough, including open spaces
- Services work in a joined-up way to ensure early identification so that children, young people and families receive the right support.

What we will do

All Age

- We will ensure that all children and young people have access to a seamless autistic spectrum condition and mental health offer that effectively manages their needs by coordinating appropriate, timely support across the multi-agency partnership. This will be delivered through our whole system review of social, emotional and mental health pathways to achieve a stronger service offer with shared accountability and assurance
- We will improve the offer of identification and support for young carers to help them find balance, give them space to play and enjoy outside of their caring responsibilities, and support them into adulthood
- We will work with our health partners to locally implement social prescribing pathways, supporting young people affected by violence by taking a holistic approach to health and wellbeing through focusing on what matters most to them. This will be implemented through our Youth Crime Prevention Strategy.



Age 0-5

- We will increase immunisation uptake by commissioning a community service to deliver ad hoc, opportunistic vaccinations across H&F to protect and promote health and wellbeing with families
- We will increase the uptake of two and a half-year-old health visiting development checks, to support early identification of needs and ensure school readiness. In addition, it is our ambition to move towards integration of these key assessment points through an integrated two-year-old check. To achieve this ambition, we will develop an implementation plan to address the challenge with regards to recruitment of health visitors which is recognised nationally.



School Age

- We will build on the success of our holiday activity and food programme by aligning our commissioned arrangements with the aim to grow our offer, create opportunities for market development and further invest in community resources to ensure sustainability
- We will continue to work with our youth providers in the community to ensure our provision is effective in creating safe spaces for young people to access. This will be a key theme in our Youth Crime Prevention Strategy
- We will work with our school network to implement a whole school trauma informed approach. Through this improved understanding of the impact of trauma, we are working to strengthen the role of our school network in safeguarding vulnerable children and young people.

Learning

As a partnership, our early intervention services commit to a culture of continuous learning through reflection of best practice and areas for improvement in evaluating our services.



What do we want to achieve?

- Services are responsive and reactive to the changing needs of the local community
- Leaders and stakeholders are committed to organisational learning across our early intervention offer
- Clear processes are established to gather and manage information quickly and effectively

What we will do

All Age

- Partners will incorporate the partnership principles into existing service evaluation processes as part of business as usual and ongoing contract monitoring arrangements to evaluate successful implementation
- We will continue to listen to and learn from our diverse communities to ensure our services are accessible and responsive to all
- We will continue to work with our social care services to identify vulnerabilities and review appropriate referral pathways to support our children and young people early, preventing upward escalation of need
- We will build on the collaborative partnerships based around GP practice population as an example of best practice
- We will develop forums with local community organisations to talk about what is happening locally and to spot issues and trends, facilitating shared learning and informing continuous improvement
- Data will be collected regularly and systematically across our offer, and a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement will drive our quality assurance efforts. Data will in turn, be used to make informed decisions about our programmes and services
- Joint training and capacity building will be provided where needed to ensure that all service areas are able to contribute to this work.

Appendix

Redesigning early intervention

Our current offer of early intervention across the partnership is fragmented and as was not designed to tackle the key issues we face today including the increased number of children in care, the increased demand on our statutory services, the continually growing number of families living in poverty and the increase in serious youth crime. Additionally, in the face of further budget pressures across the sector and growing demand, our services must be flexible to ensure we address need whilst remaining financially efficient.

Our cross-service response to support Afghan refugee families in late 2021 is a strong prototype which brought together services to provide wrap-around support for families, including health colleagues, the Department for Work and Pensions, adult learning, children's services, children's centres and specialist education staff, schools and the community sector. We want to scale up this model of integrated working within a family hub network through greater co-location of services so that regardless of where a family is, they will be able to access the same offer of integrated support.

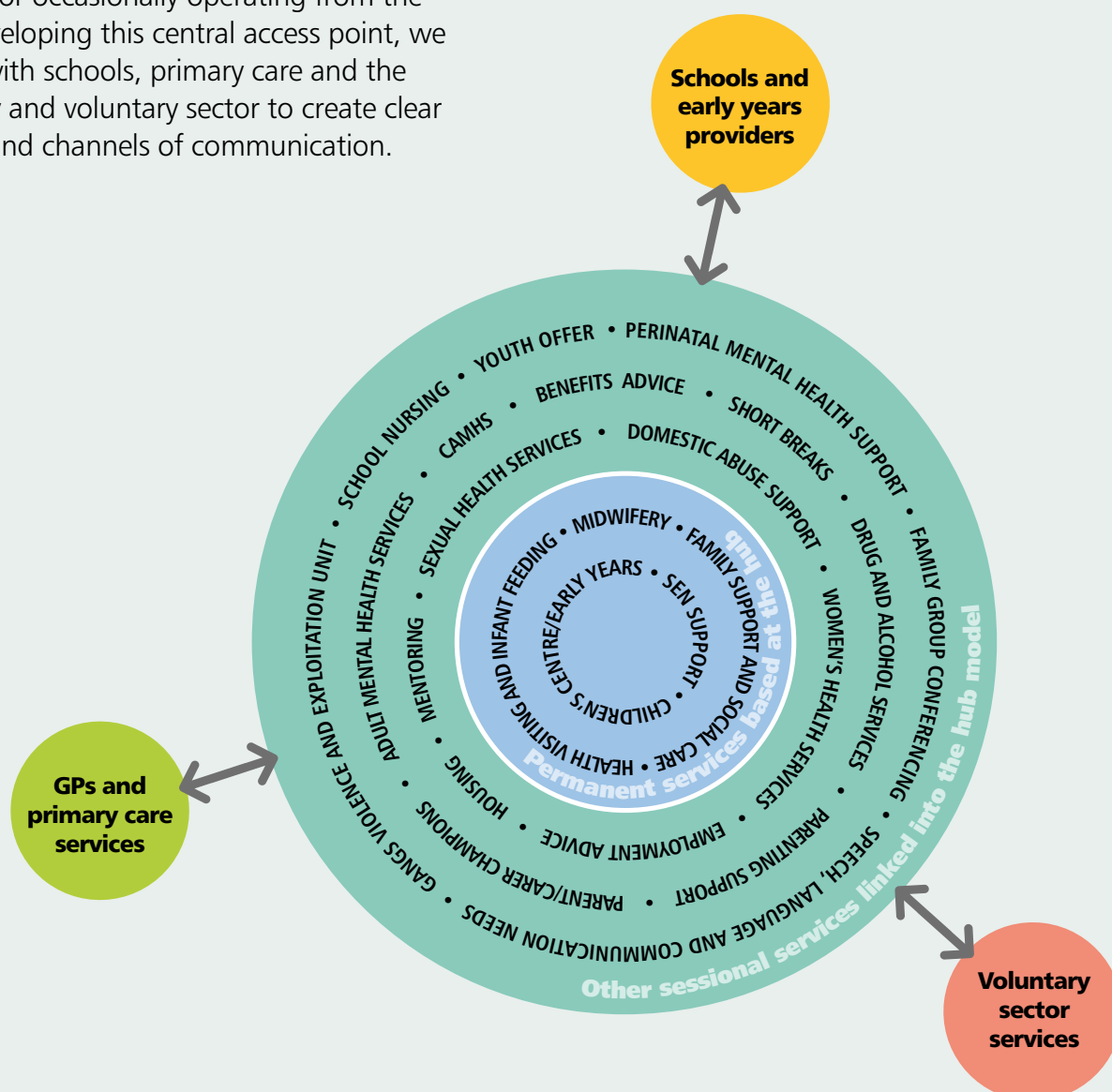


Family hubs are centres which form part of a wider integrated model of services, providing a central access point for integrated services, with professionals working together through co-location, data-sharing and a common approach to working with children, young people and families. This approach ensures services are more efficient and families receive more effective support. Centres can take a variety of forms including a dedicated building, pop-up outreach provision in community spaces, and virtual platforms.

Family Hubs

To achieve this, we will adopt a whole system approach, outlined within this strategy, enabling truly integrated pathways and shared practice models (underpinned through joint workforce development) which brings together services for the whole family to provide a joined-up offer of support for families with a single access point. This will be delivered through a combination of permanent services which are based at the hub, forming our core offer, as well as a wide range of other sessional services which will be linked into or occasionally operating from the hub. In developing this central access point, we will work with schools, primary care and the community and voluntary sector to create clear pathways and channels of communication.

In redesigning our services and commissioned arrangements within this framework, we will ensure clear points of access for children and young people, offering a structured approach for escalating need to target support appropriately and de-escalate wherever possible away from statutory services. The aim across all services within the partnership will be to ensure support provided is proportionate to presenting need, allowing the family to make change and sustain it independently.



What we will do

- We will review our current service arrangements, including through public consultation, to ensure we can offer the right support to children, young people and families, informed by the approach to early intervention outlined in this strategy. In doing so, we will adopt the principles of the Youth Voice Strategy, working with young people to influence and shape the future service offer
- We will develop a clear practice model for early intervention across the partnership in Hammersmith & Fulham including a framework for assessment and intervention, improved training to address identified issues, a structured menu of interventions and a shared set of outcomes across the partnership to improve joint working and sharing of best practice
- We will develop specific pathways for vulnerable young people including those with mental health problems, drawing on the full range of resources, expertise, and insight of all partners.



Key workers

In addition, we will be seeking to develop and expand on key working to support in embedding and unifying this work across our early intervention offer.

The 'key worker' model is a method of service delivery involving a person who works in a guiding role with families as a single point of contact across systems to empower them by providing support, resources and information tailored to meet their individual needs.

Our early intervention offer will build on the positive experiences of other local authorities through the development and measured expansion of a key worker, or 'family navigator' model to deliver early support interventions.

Currently, key working functions exist within H&F's specialist services offer. There is a variety of expertise within these from educational psychologists, practitioners trained in trauma-informed, mentalisation-based therapy, systemic family therapy, parenting intervention, substance misuse to name a few. Our intention is to draw on the learning gained so far, both from these roles and the use of navigators in other areas.

Family navigators

The shared culture and way of working described throughout this strategy will inform development of the family navigator practice model. An emphasis will be placed on working with young people and families from a strengths perspective, evaluating and supporting families ability to respond to the need of the young person and make improvements for themselves. Assessments, plans and progress measures will

all be co-produced and agreed with families against a common format, establishing a pathway towards independence for the family.

The family navigator model of support, combined with low level support such a group intervention, will enable the type and degree of support to change as a family's needs change. This is intended to ensure positive outcomes for the child or young person while building the family's resilience and capacity and will be jointly developed and agreed between the navigator and family so that progress can be sustained independently. Step-down processes will also be embedded, including, where necessary periodic 'checking in' or re-engagement and light touch contact by community-based providers.

Indicative functions of this family navigator role include:

- To act as a 'bridge' between the community and our early intervention offer, helping to develop a better understanding of need and how services could be offered differently. Often being the first point of contact for families
- To work with families, who may be more isolated, and at risk of poorer outcomes, to access services – through home visits, working with GPs and schools
- To support professionals across the early intervention, offer to engage with families
- To participate with other professionals in the development and review of a family plan for families who need support
- To support families to have their voices heard and to move towards greater self-efficacy.

What we will do

In keeping with the remit of family navigators to work across sectors there is the opportunity to 'locate' this role within certain key services including special education needs and disabilities, mental health, family support, youth justice and youth services. This shared arrangement will create opportunities for shared funding of posts to maximise both quality and value for money. There is also the opportunity to engage, via competitive procurement, a trusted local partner as the host organisation for this function.

Implementation of the family navigator model will occur via the following phased approach with further refinement of tasks to be collaboratively agreed at a later date:

- Family navigator training – including joint training to create a shared culture and way of working that cross professional boundaries and disciplines, joint development of thresholds and much clearer step-up and step-down processes
- Development of a family navigator practice model that both meets current needs and anticipates family hub model, based on joint resourcing decisions
- Implementation of the new, enhanced family navigator role at identified points across the system, including linking in with volunteer services to bolster the scope of the family navigator role and build capacity across local areas within H&F
- Integration of the family navigator role and function within the newly developed family hub offer.

We will adopt the principle of continuous learning outlined in this strategy by developing peer support schemes and intelligent supervision for family navigators to create opportunities to reflect and learn about what worked well and what was challenging.



Acknowledgements

This strategy was extensively co-produced with stakeholders across the borough who all contributed to the development of our local area approach. Thank you to all those involved for your invaluable insight, practical suggestions and constrictive criticism. The result has been a document which is truly owned by all partners across the borough which sets a strong framework for how we will work together to improve outcomes for our community.

With sincere thanks to:

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- Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust
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