

# Strategy for the Delivery of Early Help Services in Havering

December 2020 – June 2022

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## Introduction

Early help services and interventions have a vital role to play in ensuring that all children and young people in Havering have the same opportunities to grow, develop and thrive. Research tells us that positive change is most likely to occur when support is offered as early as possible and we know that a number of factors can adversely contribute to a child's development. During the first two years of life the brain displays a remarkable capacity to absorb information and adapt to its surroundings. Sensitive, attuned parenting and positive early childhood experiences are essential in promoting attachment, development and early learning. For example, talking and reading to a baby from birth can help stimulate language skills which in turn help children to develop a range of cognitive skills that are crucial for their development. Parents' ability to fulfil this role is affected by their own wellbeing and parenting skills, hence the need to consider the whole family and provide appropriate support through high-quality early education settings, early help services and health services. Perinatal mental health is a key influencer on a mother's ability to bond with her baby and attune to his/her emotions and needs, which in turn impacts on the baby's ability to develop a secure attachment.

Serious case reviews will often highlight the importance of intervening early and where opportunities may have been missed to provide an opportunity for change. This is particularly prevalent in cases of serious youth violence and gang activity where we know that issues relating to parental engagement and attachment in the formative years can result in a lack of empathetic understanding as a teenager/adult. Young people with undiagnosed or unidentified speech and language difficulties or special educational needs are also, statistically, more at risk of exploitation and criminal behaviour. With this in mind, our targeted services designed to address vulnerabilities and the issues surrounding them are a vital part of Early Help offer. This ranges from a universal offer focused on specific needs (i.e. speech and language and those with special educational needs) to a targeted offer for care leavers around education, employment and training and parenting support designed for those under 25. Our advocacy and mentoring service also provides a highly valued service to young people, both care experienced and within the borough as a whole. This is soon going to expand with the development of our 'Future Choices' offer of mentors for care leavers supporting them with obtaining and sustaining employment and/or training.

Whilst the Early Help Service is an offer, it is also an ethos that is recognised across the partnership. Our Early Help Partnership Board is well attended and works well together to identify risk and implement new ways of working. For example, the Reducing Parental Conflict maturity model has been developed and reviewed by the partnership and the introduction of the Universal Plus Service was overseen here. The Early Help Partnership Board also provides quarterly reports to the Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership to identify and raise awareness of the challenges and priorities for the Early Help Sector. Our operational partnerships are just as important as our strategic relationships, with co-location and co-delivery creating a cohesive and comprehensive offer for our residents. This includes the delivery of midwifery and health visiting services from many of our children's centres and our positive working relationships with many of the boroughs schools and early year's providers.

In order to deliver effective Early Help Services, we need to ensure that our staff are provided with the tools and knowledge to undertake skilled interventions. As part of the Children's Services Directorate and under the Assistant Director for Social Care, all staff in the Early Help Services have access to the training and development opportunities provided by the Havering Social Care Academy. This includes the accredited systemic family therapy training delivered by the Institute of Family Therapy for those staff who are case holding and managers who provide supervision.

Our *Strategy for the Delivery of Early Help Services in Havering* outlines how, over the next 18 months, we will deliver against our identified priorities. We will also focus on how our services will adapt and evolve as demand changes and the way residents access services will change in the medium to long term as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be felt.

## Our Vision for Early Help Services

Enabling our children and families  
to lead happy, healthy lives.

### Supporting Families

Families are able to access the right services at the right time, supporting the best possible outcomes at the earliest opportunity

Universal services are well publicised and accessible at a variety of venues across the borough

Parenting offer is consistent and available from pregnancy through to adolescence.

Our cohort of volunteers is diverse and flexible to respond to changing demand

Parent volunteers are supported and trained to share knowledge and build community resilience



Partner agencies are kept up to date so they are able to effectively signpost families

Support for emotional wellbeing is offered in informal, non-judgemental, environment

Universal services are designed to help every child to reach their potential, and be ready for school.

Universal services will promote a healthy lifestyle

Universal Plus Service continues to offer a multi-disciplinary response to low level need

### Learning and Improvement

Early Help Service offer is created and reviewed based on evidence of what works, demand and family's needs

Troubled Families framework is used to evidence sustained progress

Holistic family assessment is utilised to enable families to track their own journey.

Performance data is collated effectively to enable understanding of how, where and what services are used and by whom.



Mechanisms to track outcomes and impact of individual services are designed and implemented

Feedback from children and families is effectively collated and used to inform service delivery

Focus on distance travelled and progress made rather than target driven indicators.

Explore opportunities to learn from other organisations and share good practice



### Early Help Services Vision 2020-2022

### Partnerships and Collaboration

Services are delivered in a joined up way to provide the most efficient service for families; information is shared effectively to ensure families only have to tell their story once

Early Help and Universal services are delivered in collaboration with health and education partners

Link with community and corporate programmes to ensure joined up approaches and shared learning

Families and children with disabilities or learning needs have access to appropriate services and support



When concerns are identified that could lead to exclusion, children are supported to stay in school via a multi-agency approach

Effective information sharing ensures that 'hidden families' are supported to access services

Partnership approach to school readiness is agreed, with parents provided with information and tools to track their child's development

Services for care leavers with children are co-designed and support education and employment opportunities

Services are delivered at community venues and supported by parent volunteers

### Our Way of Working

Face to Face systemic working is supported by planned, purposeful and focussed interventions

Interventions are co-designed with families

Vulnerable families are encouraged to access services to respond to their needs

Always another chance – no limit on access to services

Staff are supported to manage risk with confidence and identify positive differences



Families are supported to build and repair relationships one conversation at a time.

Parents are empowered to develop their skills, create support networks and build their confidence

Family Group Conferences and Team around the Family Meetings are family led and child focussed

Written assessments and plans are recognised by the family as responding to their needs and identifying their strengths

## Our Early Help Offer

The LB Havering Early Help Service is made up of the following teams, with a remit of supporting children, young people and their families from pregnancy up to the age of 25. Early Help Services will also offer support and intervention to families with social care involvement, including independent visitors for care experienced children and young people.

### **Early Help Practitioners**

- Undertake Early Help Assessments
- Step-Up to Social Care, where needed
- Team Around the Family (TAF) Meetings

### **Attendance and Behaviour Service**

- Provides support to schools and families where children/young people may be at risk of disrupted education
- Support for primary and secondary transitions

### **Family Group Conference**

- Responsible for the undertaking of Family Group Conferences, including those which are court directed

### **Volunteering and Advocacy Service**

- Independent Visitors
- Advocacy for children and young people known to social care
- Mentoring
- Family Coach
- Future Choices Mentors

### **Universal Plus**

- Multi-Disciplinary Team response to concerns that do not meet threshold for intervention but would benefit from support and intervention.

### **Parenting**

- Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities
- Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities
- STOP Programme
- Parent Surgery

### **Children's Centres**

- Universal 0-5 offer, available to every child in the borough
- Health Visiting and Midwifery Services
- Targeted services for families where a specific need is identified
- Delivery of school readiness offer

### **Troubled Families Team**

- Monitoring and submission of our Payments by Results submissions
- Working with professionals to identify and track progress

## Statistics and Research Informing Our Service Planning

In 2017/18, 60% of the children who are resident in areas of deprivation in the borough did not access children's centre services.

Data collected by Early Help Service



Between 2011 and 2016 Havering experienced the **largest net inflow of children** across all London boroughs  
Havering Data Intelligence Hub

'School readiness starts at birth with the support of parents and caregivers, when young children acquire the social and emotional skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and life. School readiness at age five has a strong impact on future educational attainment and life chances'

Improving School Readiness: Creating a better start for London  
Public Health England, September 2015

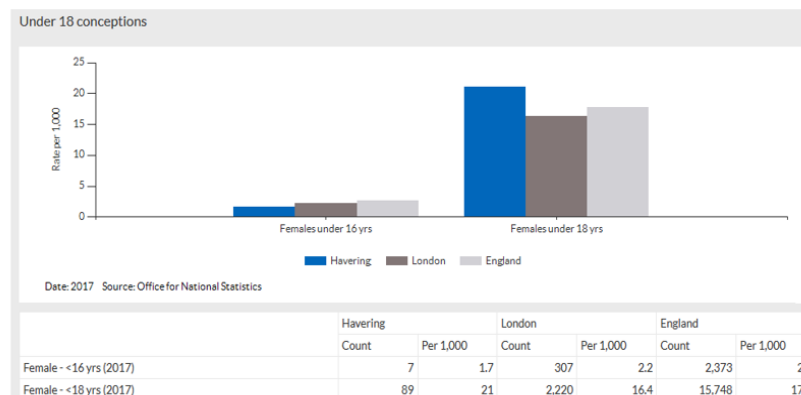
**16.6%** of children and young people in Havering are living in low income families

Havering Data Intelligence Hub

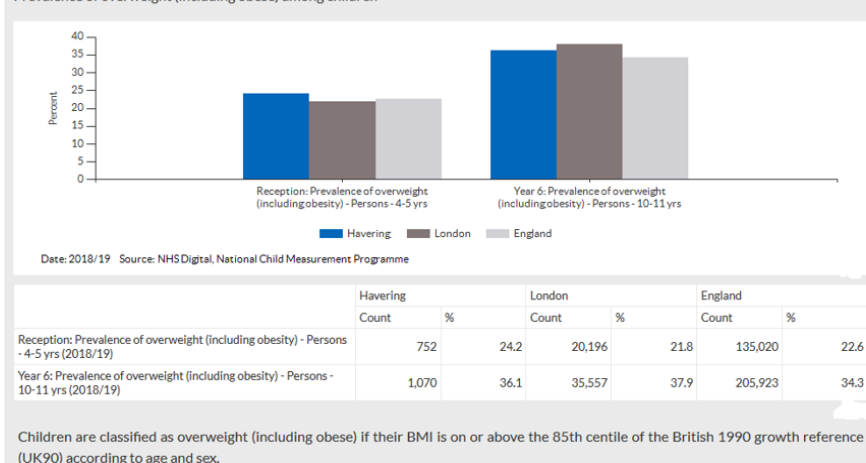


'Vulnerable children often find the transition to secondary school hard, as the limited number of close relationships at primary school are replaced by a large number of much briefer relationships.'

Keeping Kids Safe; improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation  
Children's Commissioner, February 2019



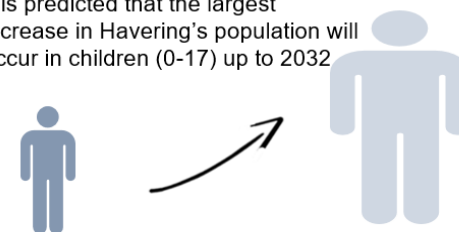
Prevalence of overweight (including obese) among children



A whole system approach is required, including overarching universal services and joining up of autonomous services to have a collective impact...Regular cross-sector communications and forums can aid this joint working through sharing of information to inform services and ensure they meet needs.

Havering Data Intelligence Hub  
Child Poverty Needs Assessment

It is predicted that the largest increase in Havering's population will occur in children (0-17) up to 2032



## Priorities

The priorities identified in this strategy are focused areas of development and implementation for the next 18 months. Each team and partner agency within the Early Help offer will, rightly, have other areas of focus and these are for the operational managers to identify and monitor. The strategic priorities have been identified based on the below criteria;

- Likely to have significant, long term impact on outcomes for children and young people
- An identified or upcoming issue likely to significantly impact on demand for statutory services if not responded to.
- A new trend or theme where a response has previously been under developed
- Requires a multi-agency strategic overview in order to respond in the most effective way.

The priorities and the associated action plan will be agreed at the Early Help Partnership Board and shared with the Local Safeguarding Partnership. This will be with the invitation of buy-in, support and challenge.

The action plan developed as part of this strategy will also ensure that residents are engaged in any new services on offer, as well as raise awareness of the benefits and outcomes associated. There have also been indicators of impact identified for each of the priorities, to help us understand and evidence what difference our offer is making to the children, young people and families of Havering.

The five key priorities identified in this strategy are;

1. **School Readiness;** *An offer is in place to support the development of skills which mean a child is best equipped to thrive and learn. Working with parents to explore the link between life skills and being ready to learn by reception age.*
2. **Education Transitions;** *Support is in place to help parents and children to manage a time which is often stressful and anxiety provoking. Effectively preparing a child for the next stage of their education can positively impact upon levels of attainment and offer an increased range of education and employment opportunities later in life. This offer will also support professionals in identifying and responding to learning needs.*
3. **Pregnancy and Newborn Support;** *Development of an offer that is more responsive to need and demand, working conjunction with health, social care and education partners. The championing of improved information sharing resulting in more early help and support offered.*
4. **Oral Health, Diet and Nutrition for Children Under Five;** *In response to trends identified in relation to childhood obesity and how this can impact upon later life outcomes. Working with parents and children to develop knowledge and skills in relation to a healthy lifestyle.*
5. **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities;** *Ensuring that additional needs are identified and responded to at the earliest opportunity, as well as offering support to those children with additional needs and their parents / carers.*

## Action Plan and Impact Monitoring

### School Readiness

Key Activities/Tasks	Lead Agency	Intended Outcome	Indicators of Impact
Embed widespread usage of school readiness booklet (Grow and Learn) encouraging parents to consider and monitor key skills and activities to promote school readiness	Early Help Service NELFT BHRUT	Parents are supported to identify key skills and behaviours that ensure their child is ready to learn	% of children achieving good level of development at the end of reception year  % of children with FSM achieving good level of development at the end of reception year
Implement registration and monitoring system to ensure information regarding services is shared and contact is sustained. This is with the aim of increasing outreach and sustained contact.	Children's Centres	More children access early help and universal services before attending nursery/pre-school to ensure any learning and/or development needs are identified and responded to.	% of eligible two year old population undertaking 2YOO
Improved engagement with social care teams regarding children of pre-school age to promote services linked to school readiness.  Increasing the number of professional partners that have access to funding information for early years, this information is then shared with partners e.g. Social Care, DWP, children's centres	Social Care Admissions  Early Help Service	More vulnerable children are ready to learn by reception age and have a positive education experience.	% of children starting reception without having previously attended an early years setting  Rate of primary school children receiving fixed term exclusions  Proportion of families with sustained contact at Children's Centres for targeted services
School readiness survey; learning from Covid-19 experience	Early Help Service	Information gathered from parents and professionals which supports the development of our school readiness programme going forward, in response to need	% of 2 year development health checks completed by Health Visitors

## Education Transitions

Key Activities/Tasks	Lead Agency	Intended Outcome	Indicators of Impact
<p>A Transitions Programme is developed to focus on key transitions milestones and early identification of support needs.</p> <p>Stop Transitions Programme is embedded for year seven pupils requiring extra support</p>	<p>Attendance &amp; Behaviour Support Service</p> <p>Youth Service</p>	<p>More children receive advice and guidance which aids a smooth transition at key milestones during their education journey.</p> <p>Children are less likely to experience disruption to the secondary education</p>	<p>Rate of secondary school children receiving fixed term exclusions</p> <p>Attendance and Behaviour targeted support (referrals)</p> <p>% of care leavers EET/NEET</p>
Implementation of Future Choices Volunteer Mentoring Programme	<p>Volunteering &amp; Advocacy Service</p> <p>Leaving Care Service</p>	To support young adults leaving care into education, employment and training	Attendance and impact of Youth Services Junior Transitions Group (Year 6-7)
Evidencing impact of school support on exclusions	Attendance & Behaviour Support Service	Support offered in schools results in avoided exclusions	Impact of Superskills Programme
Implementation of Superskills Programme	<p>Youth Service</p> <p>Public Health</p>	Children are supported to develop resilience, life skills and develop self-esteem	Record of visits to FIS Directory to access transition information, advice & support
Embed a collaborative approach to information sharing regarding in-year transitions and transitions to alternative means of education	<p>Admissions &amp; Inclusions</p> <p>Attendance &amp; Behaviour Support Service</p> <p>Early Help Service</p>	<p>To ensure that children are accessing provision and support parents in making the right preferences.</p> <p>To support parents in accessing education for their children and to ensure that no child slips through the net.</p>	Parent survey on transitions support; what works, what else is needed etc.

## Pregnancy and Newborn Support

Key Activities/Tasks	Lead Agency	Intended Outcome	Indicators of Impact
Develop an offer for expectant mothers and new parents that are referred to social care and/or subject to statutory intervention (Inc. LAC and Care Leavers). This wrap around service will focus on developing parenting skills and promoting positive attachment.	Children's Social Care  Children's Centres	All expectant mothers and new parents known to statutory social care services, including LAC and Care Leavers are given opportunity to access support services which promote positive parenting and family unification.	Number of mothers accessing Mellow Bumps, Mellow Babies and Baby Massage  Uptake of Butterflies Perinatal Support Group
Ensure effective and robust links between children's centres and the midwifery service, including better sharing of information, feedback loops and co-delivery of services.  Joined up approach with Westminster Drug Project (WDP) to ensure parents requiring support with substance misuse are accessing services when required	Children's Centres  BHRUT  WDP	All expectant mothers are offered support and teenage mothers are identified for targeted support  Earlier identification of need and support offered results in more parents who misuse substances being able to access support to improve the health and wellbeing of themselves and their child	Number of teenage parents contacted by EYP  Number of BAME families accessing support services  Number of fathers/male carers engaging in support services
Develop and strengthen our offer for BAME mothers, specifically perinatal mental health support and infant feeding support.	Children's Centres  BHRUT	More BAME mothers access support services, receive information about what services are available and feel able to access support	Number of parents accessing services via WDP and vice versa  Monitoring of C-Card Uptake
Delivery and promotion of pre and post-natal services for parents of all genders, particularly parent craft and dads club	Children's Centres  BHRUT	More variety in the gender of parents engaging with support services, and recognition of the role fathers/male carers play in a child's life	

## Oral Health, Diet and Nutrition for Children Under Five

Key Activities/Tasks	Lead Agency	Intended Outcome	Indicators of Impact
HENRY Programme / HENRY Buddy Service is delivered to vulnerable families with the impact assessed to take learning forward	Children's Centres/Early Help Service NELFT Public Health	Families are supported to develop routines and good habits in relation to food and meal times. Supports a positive attitude towards diet and health.	HENRY course evaluation % of 5 year olds free from dental decay % of 3 year olds free from dental decay
Increased uptake of Infant Feeding Programmes and analysis of impact	Children's Centres NELFT	Promotion of positive bonding and health benefits for babies, more parents are supported to reduce stress associated with feeding.	Children receiving all childhood immunisations % of children underweight/overweight/healthy weight at reception age
Dental Nurse Drop In and Oral Health Workshop	NHS England Children's Centres	Increased awareness of oral health, impact of sugar on teeth and how to engage young children in teeth brushing	Evidence of increased referrals from specialist services
Healthy Early Years Programme; ensuring a healthy diet for children, supporting oral health alongside food.	Children's Centres	Providing parents with an understanding of how to maintain and establish good oral health and nutrition. Reducing childhood obesity.	Prevalence of mothers breast feeding at 6-8 weeks

## Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Key Activities/Tasks	Lead Agency	Intended Outcome	Indicators of Impact
Embed links with Speech and Language Therapy Service, Health Visiting Service and Ready, Steady, Talk Group for those children on the waiting list for low level services.	NELFT Children's Centres	An increased amount of children access speech and language support before the age of five	Referral rate to Ready, Steady, Talk Group and outcomes for attendees.  Referrals of parents to the Family Learning Service
Formalise the pathways between Children's Centre and the 0-5 CAD Team.  Focus on resumption of services in light of Covid-19 restrictions where possible.	CAD 0-5 Team Children's Centres	Children with SEN are able to access support, advice and guidance as well as services and activities to aid development.	Average wait time with regard to referral pathway  Parent survey on SEN support; what works, what else is needed etc.
Raise awareness of early education offer for children in receipt of DLA and ensure robust information sharing between CAD, Admissions and Early Help Service	CAD Admissions Early Help Service	To support children into provision at an earlier point to ensure needs are identified and enable other services to work with the children.	
Improved signposting of parents to SEN offer by Youth Services	Early Help Family Practitioners Youth Services	Increased uptake in families with older children with SEN accessing Youth Services offer	

## Delivery of Virtual and Community Based Services

In response to the guidance and restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Early Help partnership had to quickly adapt their offer to provide an alternative whilst venues were closed. During this period it was recognised that virtual and online delivery is an effective way of reaching a cohort of parents who may otherwise be unable, or unwilling, to attend sessions in a children's centre or other venue. The following restrictions on group sizes also provided opportunities for more one to one work with parents and carers.

As part of our ambition to grow the number of families we are able to reach and expand our offer into community venues, we undertook a public consultation in the summer of 2019. The responses to this consultation highlighted the strong value of children's centres and the early help offer within the community. However a number of opportunities for community expansion were identified with a number of residents expressing that they would be willing to utilise services offered at alternative venues, particularly community centres and leisure centres. Other partners we are keen to collaborate with to strengthen our service delivery are libraries, early years settings and primary schools, the latter with a focus on our school readiness offer.

The lessons learned during the public consultation and the subsequent response to the Covid-19 pandemic, has strengthened our resolve to embed more creativity in the way we deliver early help and intervention in the future. We acknowledge that there will always be a need for a physical space for families to access face to face support, however we commit to continuing to trialling new and innovative ways of working within the community.

## What the Future Holds

In the coming months and years, budgets for all Council services will be tight and the need for collaboration will be stronger than ever before. Our Early Help Partnership is built on strong foundations and has already achieved great outcomes for children and families within the borough. Our strategy sets out our priorities for the next 18 months, however is by no means exhaustive of the work carried out by colleagues within the partnership. The Early Help Partnership Board will continue as the forum for the strategic oversight of the work carried out, as well as any successes and challenges that are faced. Our Early Help Operational Forum will oversee the day to day work completed via task and finish groups, with this then feeding into the Partnership Board via regular reporting. We will also continue our role as part of the Havering Safeguarding Partnership with regular updates.

In the future we are likely to see a greater demand on early help and early intervention services, as families struggle with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. These are likely to be some families that have never needed our services previously, and others that we have supported before. We also need to continue to be mindful of the changing demographic within our borough and ensure that our services are inclusive and accessible to all who need them.

I am confident in the strength of our partnership and the high quality of services on offer, I look forward to being part of the continuing journey.

**Robert South | Director of Children's Services | Chair of Early Help Partnership Board**