

## London Borough of Enfield

### Children & Young Peoples Scrutiny 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

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**Subject:** Early Help Services and their effectiveness

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Mahtab Uddin

**Executive Director:** Tony Theodoulou

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an overview of the effectiveness of Early Help Services for children and families in Enfield. This report focuses on the provision of targeted early help for children, young people and families.

#### **Relevance to the Council Plan**

2. The provision of Early Help services contributes to the strategic priority of '*safe, healthy and confident communities*' reflected within the Council's Plan

#### **Background**

3. The Early Help Strategy for All 2021-2025 is one of the cross-cutting themes of the Council's ambition of creating a lifetime of opportunities for everyone.
4. The Early Intervention Foundation describes early help as "identifying and providing effective early support to children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes." Many families are facing complex issues resulting in multiple needs. These needs can escalate and result in involvement of children social care, if families are not supported to address these issues early on.
5. There is a broad range of legislation that underpins the work of Early Help including: Article 19 of the United Nation's Convention of the Rights of the Child, The Children Act 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
6. The Enfield Early Help Family Hub model consists of:
  - Children's portal – a mechanism that facilitates referrals to Early Help;
  - Early Help Triage – screening all referrals to Early Help to ensure these meet the eligibility criteria;

- Change and Challenge and Parenting Support teams delivering Early Help;
- Commissioned Children Centre provision, delivered by schools, delivering targeted family support alongside the universal offer; and

Families accessing Early Help benefit from having their needs assessed, using an Early Help assessment based on the Signs of Safety framework and use of the Family Star Outcomes tool. The Family Star measures the distance travelled from the point of the assessment throughout the team around the child/family review meetings to the point of the case closure.

The Early Help Family Hub works closely with the MASH and social care teams to ensure there is an effective step up/step down support to families when their needs change.

Early Help Family Hub works closely with a wider early help system of prevention and universal services provided by schools, health visiting, school nurses, early years, GPs, midwifery, substance misuse and sexual health services, youth services and third sector partners.

### **Main Considerations for the Panel – performance and impact of Early Help**

This report is supported by performance data for the period of 01 April 2020 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The annual report and performance information for 2021/22 is currently in production and not available at this point.

#### **7.1 Referrals to Early Help**

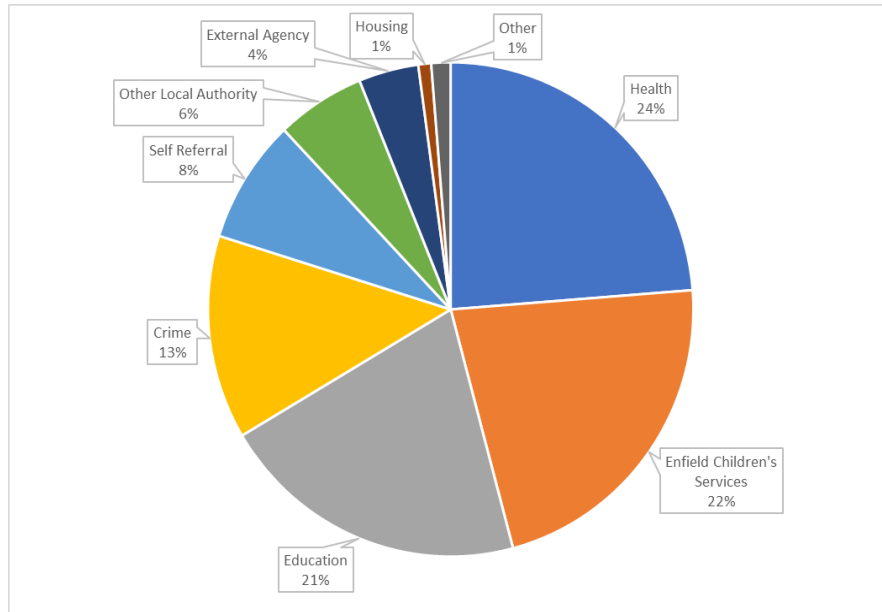
Between 01 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, a total of **1,402** referrals were received by the Early Help Family Hub. This shows a reduction of 15% from the previous year 2019/2020 when the total of referrals was 1,652. This is also consistent with the reduction of referrals seen in social care for the same period.

Our analysis indicates the variance in trend of referrals coincides with the pandemic's lockdown and restrictions. It is also important to note that the move from local reporting to the Liquid Logic Early Help software programme reporting may have also impacted on the data quality.

The latest data on referrals to Early Help for this financial year (up to the end of January 22) shows 1,526 referrals with our forecast expecting the number of referrals to exceed 1,800 by the end of March 2022. This is a positive trajectory.

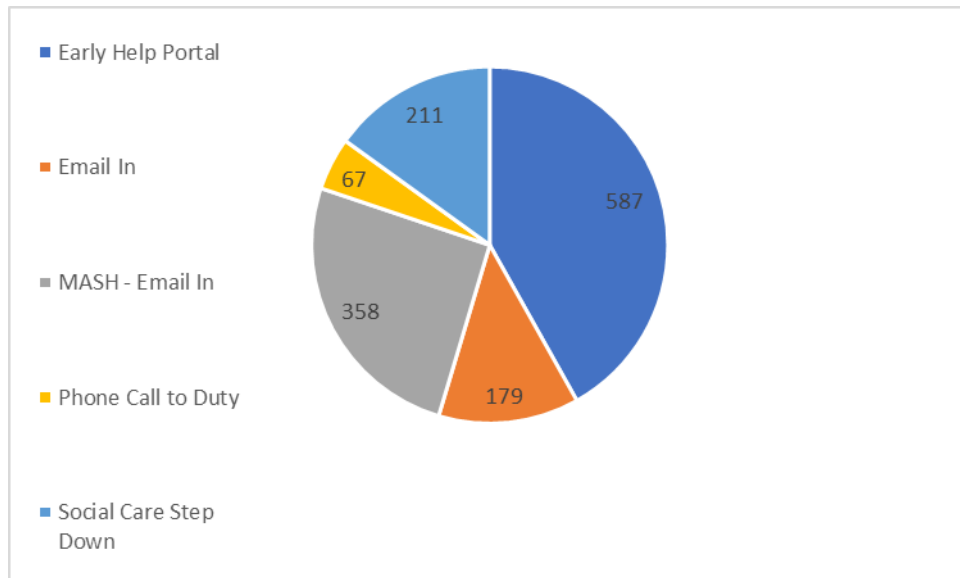
Chart 1 highlights that the highest number of referrals to Early Help comes from education, children services and health, which is consistent with a typical trend.

Chart 1



The Children's portal was introduced in 2019 to provide a consistent and effective front door to Early Help. The data in the chart 2 highlights that the majority of referrals (67%) come via the Children's portal or MASH, which is positive. More work will be taking place to further embed the use of the Early Help portal with partners and the integration of the Early Help Triage within the MASH.

Chart 2 – Breakdown of referrals traffic to the Early Help



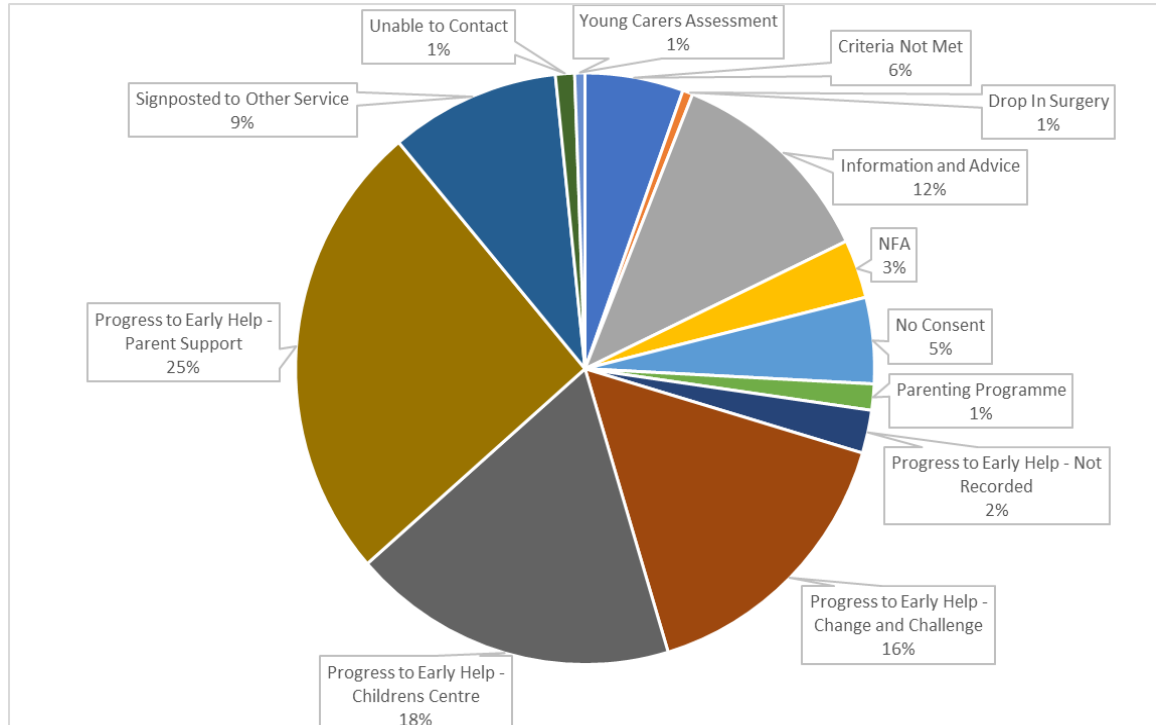
## 7.2 Referral outcomes

The data reflected within chart 3 highlights the following outcomes:

- 94 % of referrals were accepted by the Early Help Family Hub after meeting the eligibility criteria, which is positive

- The majority of referrals (59%) have accessed targeted support provided either by the Parenting Support, Change and Challenge service or Children Centres, benefiting from the Early Help assessment being used to identify additional needs and a plan of support to help these children and families
- Only 1% of families were considered and referred to the parenting programmes as a referral outcome. This number does not accurately reflect the reality as some families may have accessed the parenting programmes as plan of the plan or referred directly to the parenting programmes rather than via the Children’s Portal.
- 1% of referrals required a young carer’s assessment, which is a drop from previous year. Going forward, we will be developing a holistic approach to assessing young carer’s needs and more accurate data collection of young people with caring responsibilities and working with commissioners to ensure we meet the needs of these vulnerable young people
- 22% of referrals have resulted in the provision of information advice and guidance, signposting to other services to access help or accessing a drop in surgery
- A small number of referrals did not result in accessing Early Help due to the following reasons - 5 % of referral either not provided with or withdrew consent, 1% of referrals were not contactable and 3% did not require further action
- 2% of referrals have not had their outcome recorded

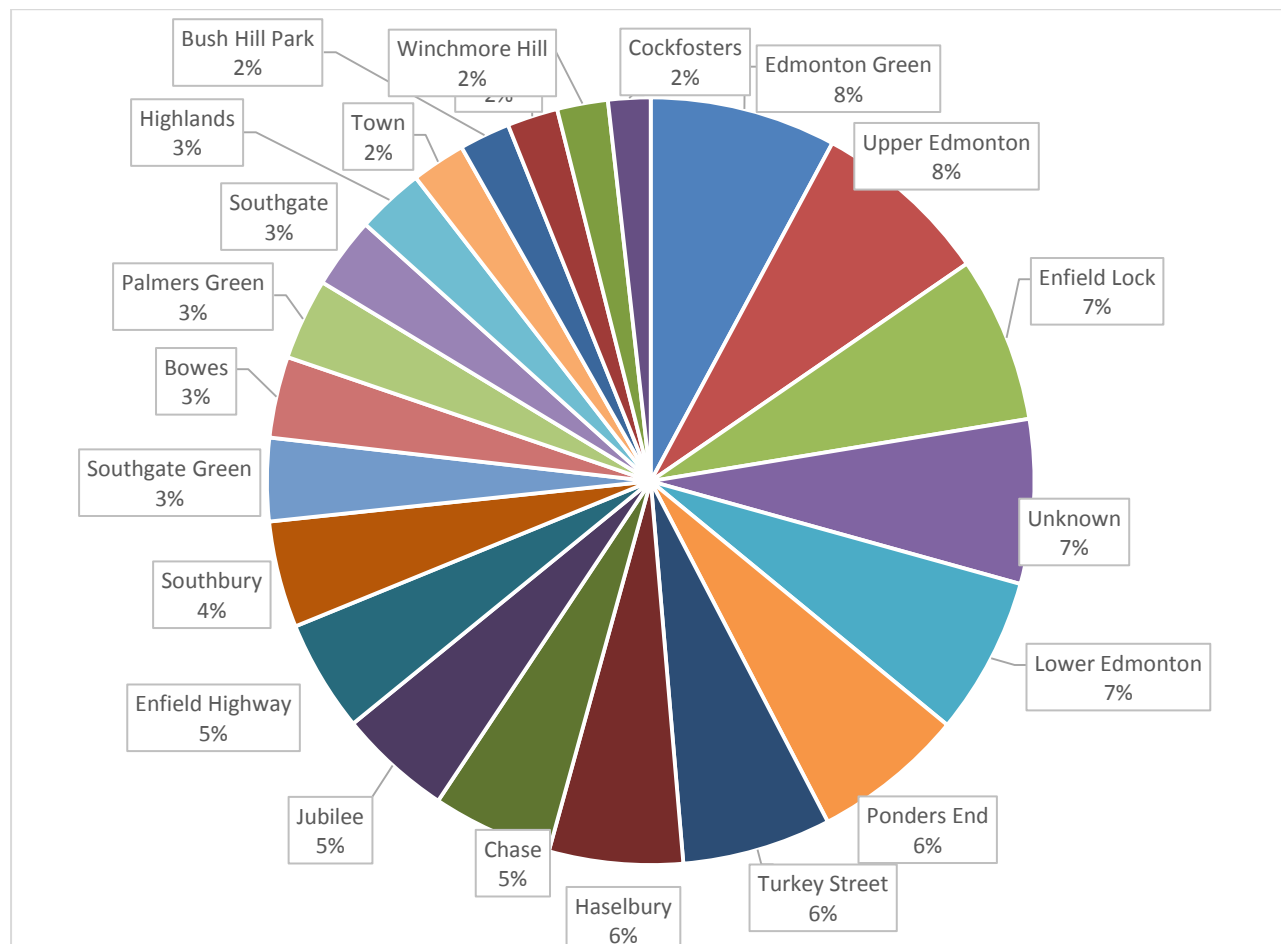
*Chart 3 - The data tracking the outcome from the referrals*



### 7.3 Demography of families accessing Early Help by wards and ethnicity

Data on the profile of referrals by wards highlight a stronger prevalence of referrals coming from the East side of the Borough which has the highest levels of deprivation and social issues, see chart 4

Chart 4



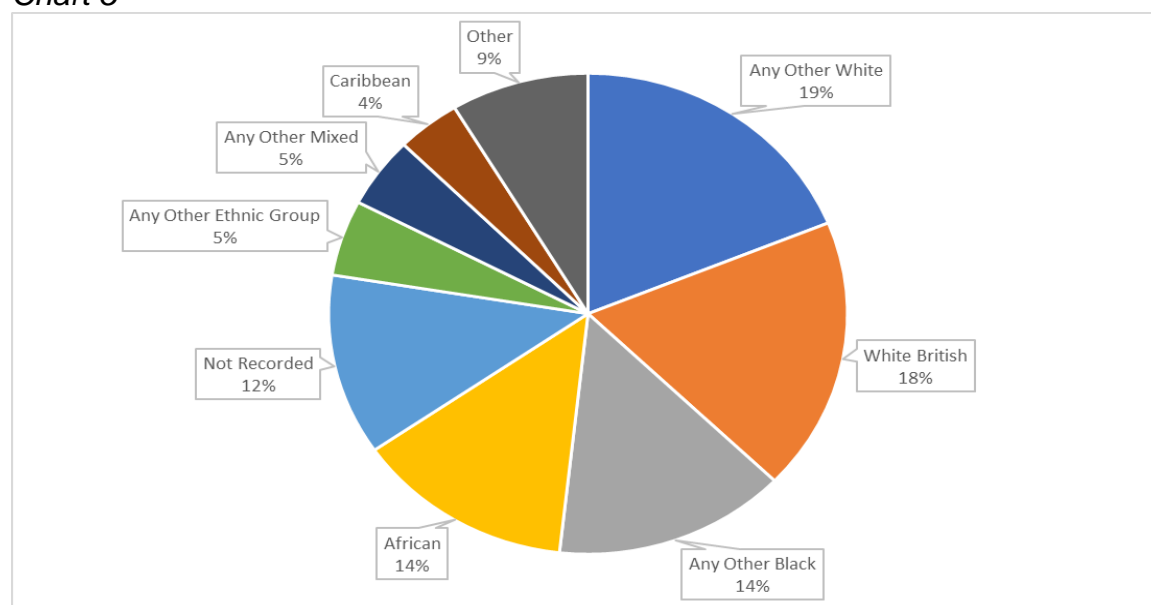
Research evidence highlights that Black and mixed-heritage boys are less likely than their peers to have been referred to early help services when they were younger, but more likely to have been involved with children’s social care and youth justice services.

42% of the cohort of families receiving Early Help came from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background, see chart 5. This could be viewed as positive in terms of access and provision of Early Help.

However, caution needs to be exercised when making definitive conclusions on engaging with diverse communities as 21% of the cohort had not had either their ethnicity recorded or have chosen the ‘other’ as a category. We recognise that we need to further examine our procedures and processes for all early help

services to see if our approaches are going far enough to meet the needs for this group of children.

**Chart 5**



## 7.4 Step up and step down

The crucial aspect of early help services is to provide continuing support for children and families who have been 'stepped down' from statutory social care provision, which was recognised by the Ofsted 2015 report on early help. The report highlighted that in too many cases, children's social care ended their involvement without securing appropriate support for children with families falling through the net and eventually being re-referred to social care.

Between 01 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, the Early Help Family Hub received 211 step-down cases from children social care, providing a hand holding level of support to these children and families to sustain positive progress and prevent re-referrals to social care.

29 cases in total were stepped-up from the Early Help Family Hub due to safeguarding concerns to the children social care. This is a very low number, indicating the effectiveness of Early Help and preventing the needs of children and families escalating into statutory services.

## 7.5 Re-referrals

The current re-referral rate to the Council's Early Help provision within six months of the case closure averages within 18.5%-20.3% during 2021/22. This measure was introduced this financial year.

This means that 80% of families have benefited from sustainable improvement.

Going forward, we will be reviewing the re-referral cases to develop a better understanding of the reasons for the re-referrals to help us to improve our practice.

## 7.6 Early Help impact measured via Family Outcomes star

The Early Help Family Hub uses the Family Star Plus tool to dovetail with the Early Help assessment and team around the child reviews to measure impact of the Early Help.

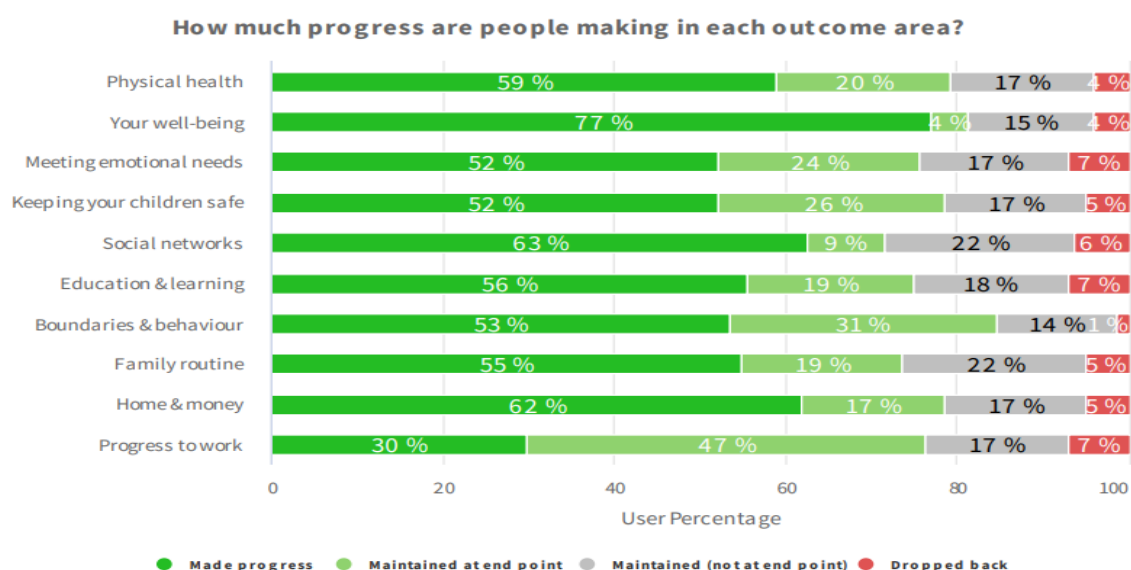
During 2020/21:

- 100% of all service users improved in at least one area;
- 95% improved in at least two areas;
- 86% improved in at least three areas; and
- On average a service user improved in 5.5 areas out of 10

Chart 6 provides a breakdown of the progress made by families by category of outcomes and highlights the following:

- Early Help support provided is most impactful in the following areas: improving well-being and social networks for families and their children, followed by physical health, children’s education and learning, improved parenting capacity in terms of setting boundaries, behaviour and family routine and keeping children safe and money issues.
- The least impactful area of work is supporting parents to progress to work. This has been impacted by the pandemic and the temporary loss of the seconded DWP workers.

Chart 6



## 7.8 Quality of practice

The Early Help Family Hub is a part of the Children and Family Services' quality and practice assurance framework. All services complete a 6-weekly audit and moderation process, which is reviewed by senior leadership. Children Centre's audits of practice show that 95% are rated either as outstanding or good with higher prevalence of outstanding grades (62%). 83% of audits within Change and Challenge and Parenting Support Service has been rated either as good or outstanding with higher prevalence of good grades (65%). Overall, this highlights a positive picture on the quality of practice and work with families.

## 7.9 Turning families around – payments by results achievements

497 families have been identified and supported through our Change and Challenge, funded by the Supporting Families Grant (previously known and Troubled Families Grant).

Enfield Council Early Help achieved 100% payment by results for 'turning these families around', achieving positive and significant sustained progress in more than three of the following categories: reduced involvement in crime, improved education outcomes, children accessing help, reducing worklessness and financial exclusion and improvement of health outcomes.

Note, majority of the 497 families are not included within the referral numbers to Early Help.

## 7.10 Strengthening the focus of Early Help on tackling serious youth violence

Enfield has the highest levels of serious youth violence in London. In 2021, the Council has adopted public health approach to the reduction of Serious Youth Violence, informed by local needs assessment. The needs assessment identified the strength of association between various risk factors and serious youth violence in Enfield alongside of providing us with a deeper understanding of the local needs. (see table 1). This has been pertinent in terms of informing our focus of where we prioritise our resources and interventions to help us to prevent serious youth violence. One of the key recommendations is that Early Intervention is critical to addressing the underlying root causes of the problem.

*Table 1 - indicators showing strongest correlation with serious youth violence in Enfield*

<b>Crime</b>	<b>Deprivation and unemployment</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Social care</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug trafficking (0.6)</li> <li>• Domestic violence (0.6)</li> <li>• Possession of a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAB financial debt advice contacts (0.5)</li> <li>• Household overcrowding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed term school exclusions (0.5)</li> <li>• EHCPs (0.5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looked after children (0.6)</li> <li>• Social care contacts (0.5)</li> </ul>



knife or bladed object (0.5)	(0.5)	• Child Protection cases (0.4)
• Criminal damage (0.6)	• Index Multiple Deprivation (0.4)	
• Drug possession (0.4)	• Unemployment or long-term unemployment (0.4)	
• Public order offences (0.5)		

The Council has implemented the following new Early Intervention initiatives as part of its public health approach (note this is not an exhaustive list):

- developing Strengthening Families approach within Youth Offending Service. Since June 2021, 3 Family Coaches have been providing support to families of young people involved in youth offending with a specific focus on working with the whole family and siblings of young offenders
- piloting project Dove from August 2021, funded from the health inequalities fund, creating dedicated referral pathways from health settings, schools and Police for children and young people showing high risk factors to serious youth violence
- piloting Operation Alliance in partnership with Police, Haringey Council, Oasis Hadley and Children Society, placing youth support workers in the Wood Green Custody Suite. The project aims to provide early identification of additional needs and follow through support for young people within the community with focus on plugging them in to the Early Help.
- Developing Family Hubs network model in Enfield

### 7.11 Leveraging resources to deliver Early Help

Funding for early help across the country has been significantly reduced or discontinued in the last decade. This is against the backdrop of the overall funding for local authority children and young people services across the country falling by an estimated £2.2 billion between 2010 and 2019.

Council has sought alternative funding streams and made new investments, collaborating with partners in leveraging financial resources to sustain and increase our early help offer. Table 2 provides an overview of examples of initiatives that have been funded to enhance Early Help in the last 12 months. (please note this is not an exhaustive list).

Table 2

Initiative	Funding
Funding support for Trauma Informed Practice in schools	£90,000
Project Vanguard -NCL CCG regional bid – provision of therapeutic support (2 clinicians and 2 youth workers) within community for young people at risk of exploitation and serious youth violence.	N/A as a regional bid

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Funding</b>
CCG Health Inequalities funding Project Dove – violence reduction social prescribing early help case worker	£42,000
VRU funding for the Operation Alliance in the Wood Green custody suite	£200,000
DfE Covid recovery grant to develop feasibility for Family Hubs	£46,000
DfE funding for Holiday and Food Activities for children eligible for free school meals	£1,493,520
Council funding Summer University	£80,000
NEXUS programme for targeted youth support for young people in schools and youth centres to reduce school exclusions	£500,000
Council capital funding to procure mobile youth provision	£90,000
Securing Violence Reduction funding to fund additional detached youth workers	£68,000
Council funding additional contextual safeguarding youth workers	£40,000
Council funding from capital receipts joined up pilot project between Housing and Early Help to support families in temporary accommodation	£87,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,241,529*</b>

*\*not including NCL regional bid amount for Vanguard*

## **8. Early Help system improvement**

Our priority is to continue to build on our mature Early Help system in Enfield whilst responding to the:

- local needs of children and families in Enfield;
- challenges arising from the impact of the pandemic on the lives of children and families and the wider Early Help system; and
- fiscal challenges within public sector service delivery

### **8.1 Strengthening the Council's Early Help provision for children and families**

We are currently reviewing the Council's Early Help for children and families with the ambition to:

- Harmonise the existing teams into Early Help Family Support
- Redesign the Early Help assessment and integrating the distance travelled tool into the Early Help assessment and team around the child/family review to simplify the Early Help conversations when working with children and families
- Improve the parenting programmes offer through a more joined-up and coordinated approach with partners
- Integrate the young carers assessment within the existing assessment frameworks. Improve support for young carers through training and provision of new dedicated youth provision to provide respite for young carers

- Develop a new digital online brochure of the Early Help directory to help professionals and families navigate and access Early Help
- Redesign the journey of the child by providing more holistic support to families through closer working with children centre provision, moving away from allocating cases for targeted Early Help by an age split
- Co-locate Early Help Triage with the MASH to improve joined up working
- Strengthen the data collection, recording and performance reporting from the Liquid Logic Early Help; and
- Continue to embed the public health approach to tackling wider determinants of children and young people linked to the likelihood to being impacted by serious youth violence

## **8.2 Maximising partnership working within delivery of Early Help**

We will be focusing in the next eighteen months on:

- capacity building within the Early Help system through provision of effective training for key partner agencies, embedding integrated working processes and tools to facilitate Early Help conversations with families to increase access to Early Help;
- implementing the delegated function within our children's portal to enable other professionals to contribute to the assessment and plan of support for children and families to improve information sharing and co-delivery of support;
- developing shared commissioning priorities with the CCG to ensure that we commission services in response to the needs and growing demands in the wider context of the fiscal challenges faced; and
- connecting Early Help for children and families with the wider Early Help offer for all residents through joined up working with Housing, Community Hubs, Adult Services and Community Safety;
- enabling integration of services and resources across Early Help system with focus on reducing demand in acute/statutory services

## **8.3 Developing an effective Early Help system via Family Hubs**

The government has committed to championing Family Hubs. The Department for Health and Social Care in March 2021 published the Best Start for Life review: A Vision for the 1,001 critical days, highlighting Family Hubs at the heart of the Early Help offer. The comprehensive spending review committed £82 million in 75 areas, as part of the £560 million identified for family support. Family Hubs provide a central access point for integrated family services. Family Hubs can include buildings, virtual offer and outreach.

Developing Family Hubs presents a strong strategic fit for strengthening our local Early Help system in terms of joining up and integrating services further in line with the Council's Early Help Strategy for All.

Enfield Council has secured funding from the DfE in the region of £46,000 to develop Family Hubs network model to improve delivery of Early Help services.

Our ambition is to enhance the Early Help offer through a Family Hubs approach, bringing services together into Family Hubs network for families with children of all ages (0-19) and or up to 25 with SEND. Our approach to developing Family Hubs in Enfield is to:

- build on the existing strengths;
- join up and bring existing family help services together, to improve access to services and connections with families with a focus on the 'journey of the child/family';
- provide a strong universal offer (health visiting, safeguarding, midwifery, infant feeding, mental health support and SEND services) alongside of a universal plus offer (this may include, youth support, family support, housing advice, employment and debt management advice, sexual health provision, DA support and parenting programmes);
- incorporate the best use of the existing buildings, including Community Hubs, Youth Centres, Children Centre delivery sights alongside virtual delivery methods and outreach whilst tapping into any new opportunities within our existing regeneration programme of work;
- deliver high-quality provision or children's early years to provide the best start in life and school readiness; and
- integrate health and public health priorities with early help and social care through a joined up commissioning approach and bringing services to the local communities

The Mutual Ventures have been commissioned to support co production of the Family Hubs model. The Family Hubs feasibility study will be completed by April 2022 and will:

- define a strategic fit and vision, building on our strengths;
- review and test the potential impact of Family Hubs;
- outline the options and assess the best fit model for services operationally and the governance, including high level costing; and
- outline a high-level transformation road map

The Council has also submitted a bid for transformation funding, for which we are currently awaiting an outcome.

## Conclusions

9. The Council's Early Help system overall and the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection was rated as good within the last Ofsted inspection in March 2019. It specifically highlighted the positive work of early help triage, supported by a comprehensive and broad range of good quality universal and targeted early help services.
10. The evidence in this report highlights good access to Early Help by children and families with further due diligence work planned to test this out.
11. Our data shows that families accessing Early Help are achieving positive outcomes reflected within the Family Outcomes Star. This clearly reduces the risk of needing an intervention from statutory services.
12. The low levels of re-referrals and low numbers of families stepped up to social care from Early Help further validate the quality and the impact of Early Help support enabling families to sustain positive outcomes.
13. The Council has secured extensive additional funding to boost the local Early Help offer and has made a firm commitment to the delivery of the Early Help Strategy for All.
14. The Early Help system within Enfield has capacity to further improve, which will be enabled by:
  - the review and redesign of the Council's Early Help services; including better intelligence of the effectiveness of Early Help across wider system,
  - focus on partnership working and capacity building;
  - continued focus on leveraging resources within delivery of Early Help; and
  - strengthening Early Help as a whole system approach through developing Family Hubs.

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## Appendices

N/A

## Background Papers

N/A