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**Decision Maker:** CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

**Date:** 15 June 2022

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** EARLY INTERVENTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT  
ANNUAL UPDATE

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**Chief Officer:** Richard Baldwin  
Director; Children Education and Families

**Ward:** All Wards.

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report is an information briefing on the work of Early Intervention and Family Support and the services provided to families.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Children Education and Families PDS Committee is invited to note the content of the report.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Positive
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
  2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People Excellent Council Safe Bromley Healthy Bromley Regeneration:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: N/A
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable: within existing Budget
  3. Budget head/performance centre: N/A
  4. Total current budget for this head: £ N/A
  5. Source of funding: N/A
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: N/A
  2. Call-in: Not-Applicable
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): N/A
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

### **3. COMMENTARY**

- 3.1 Early Intervention and Family Support Services sits within Children's Social Care. The umbrella of EIFS encompasses both statutory and non-statutory services, as well as being the lead for Bromley's Supporting Families (previously known as 'Tackling Troubled Families') work, and more recently the strategic responsibility for Domestic Violence and Abuse (intergenerational). Consequently, EIFS comprises of a number of different services / programmes as listed below;
- Children and Family Centres
  - Bromley Children Project Family Support and Parenting Practitioner Team (FSPP Team)
  - Parenting offer
  - The 'CAF' Team (Common Assessment Framework)
  - Children's Contact Centres
  - Information Advice and Support Service (IASS)
  - Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategic Lead Officer
  - Reducing Parental Conflict Programme
  - ASC Coordinator for the Borough
- 3.2 This paper will provide a snapshot of some of the work undertaken since the initial national lockdown in March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to ensure the safety of our families accessing services and our staff / partner agencies providing services, the offer across the service has changed; some activities have had to pause, some have continued throughout, and new activities and services or ways of delivering services have developed.
- 3.3 The safety of our staff and our residents has remained paramount. Safety has taken centre stage and we have put in place robust measure with guidance from colleagues in Public Health. These measures have allowed the service to keep the doors open to the public throughout the pandemic, providing services and support to residents, as well as developing other ways to provide support such as on-line.
- 3.4 Some of the new ways of delivering services will remain despite Government removing domestic restrictions in England, and as a service working directly with residents, we will continue to promote the advice and guidance from Public Health; vaccinations, ventilation, hand washing/ sanitisation and to consider a face covering if in a crowded and/or enclosed space.

#### **3.5 Children and Family Centres**

- 3.5.1 Work was undertaken with support from the central COVID Team to make all six of our Children and Family Centres, and our offices in the Central Library, COVID safe. The measures in place were approved and resulted in the sites reopening to staff and partners, and families for specific restricted activities only, in April 2020, and remained open throughout the pandemic.
- 3.5.2 We have offered 'by appointment only' health appointments for health Visiting, Midwifery, and some mental health services such as the perinatal team, including during the National Lockdown (tier 5 = 'T5') periods. This remains in place but will be returning to 'drop-in' following the Government's lifting of domestic restrictions in Spring 2022.
- 3.5.3 We developed a range of 'safe bubble' Learn and Play sessions lead by our staff, again by appointment only, for our most vulnerable and isolated families. These have run throughout the pandemic with the exception of during T5. These remain in place, but we are increasing the number of participants in order to support more families, following the Government's lifting of domestic restrictions in Spring 2022.

- 3.5.4 In addition to the Safe Bubble Learn and Play sessions which have been for a limited number of families due to the safety measures, we developed a number of Learn and Play packs. These have been delivered to families via a 'doorstop drop' service which we developed inhouse and within COVID safety requirements. Following the Government's lifting of domestic restrictions in Spring 2022, this service will no longer be offered as a 'door-stop drop' but packs will remain available for families to collect in the Children and Family Centres.
- 3.5.5 We have continued to be an issuer for Healthy Start Vitamins and to support families during the pandemic have delivered via our 'doorstop drop' service. Following the Government's lifting of domestic restrictions in Spring 2022, this service will no longer be offered as a 'door-stop drop' but Healthy Start Vitamins will be available to collect from the Children and Family Centres.
- 3.5.6 Our Swap-Shop offer continued without the 'swap' element – we have delivered bundles of clothes etc. but have not been accepting donations during COVID. Any bundles requested have been delivered to families via our 'doorstop drop' service. Following the Government's lifting of some domestic restrictions in September 2021, we stopped offering this as a 'door-stop drop' and families were welcomed to access this in the Children and Family Centres. Donations are now being accepted from residents and business e.g., Russell & Bromley donated children's shoes.
- 3.5.7 We retained our Foodbank Voucher status and worked with the Foodbank at the beginning of this pandemic to adapt their paper system to an E Vouchers system which was then adopted. We continue to support the Foodbanks however during the pandemic many other teams in Bromley and other partner agencies started to undertake this role too and we saw a dramatic reduction in the number of families approaching the Children and Family Centres for Foodbank support.
- 3.5.8 During the pandemic, at Christmas time, we undertook our usual role alongside donators of gifts, hampers, and turkeys, to ensure these items were directed to our vulnerable families and again, delivered these via our 'doorstop drop' service. As restrictions eased, we held Christmas parties for our most targeted families within the COVID safety restrictions. Families were hugely grateful for the gifts and the generosity of Bromley's residents and businesses.
- 3.5.9 During COVID our work with the Gypsy Romany and Traveller (GRT) community has continued, with the focus on developing a strong understanding of the individual and collective needs of our local GRT communities and how we can use our local knowledge creatively to develop services to meet identified needs.
- 3.5.10 One challenge is that the GRT community do not choose to identify as GRT when reporting to authority. We are working with the community to change this. We are building data reporting to capture GRT statistics using addresses, but this will not capture those families living beyond own known sites.
- 3.5.11 The Practice Assurance Stocktake in June 2021 stated: "Impressive work was seen with the Traveller community, which showed sensitivity, and a developing understanding of their culture and how to work with the community to link them into services"
- 3.5.12 Our site visits to the Star Lane site continued throughout (except during T5) and included requests for doorstep drops of Learn and Play materials. With the support of the Site Manager and residents, we have been granted permission to expand this service to include the

Maidstone Road site. Supported by colleagues at the Depot, we are using their van and have purchased tents, chairs, and cushions to create a recognisable 'space' weather permitting, to set-up when we are on site. We have supported families from this community and more of the families are now choosing to declare their Gypsy, Romany, and Traveller heritage. Data shows that our concerted effort to make our service accessible is working; since 2012 when we were supporting 1 member of the Gypsy Romany and Traveller community, this has increased and during 2019/20 we were actively working with and supporting 80 members of the community who agreed to declare their heritage, across all EIFS services, and as COVID restrictions have started to lift, we have seen this community re-engaging with services, and have supported over 30 in 2020/21 and again in 2021/22.

- 3.5.13 During COVID we have been working with colleagues under the Bromley All Age Autism Working Group and developing our centres to be Centres of ASC excellent. Part of this work has seen the development and introduction of Self-Sooth boxes for families with a child who needs to access additional tools to enable them to access the provision. In addition to this we have recruited to the Autistic Spectrum Conditions ASC Coordinator Role which is embedded within EIFS. The response has been positive with engagement from families and professionals alike.
- 3.5.14 We have also worked with and supported our colleagues in the SEN Advisory Team to enable them to run targeted play sessions for children with SEN including Social Communication difficulties from the Children and Family Centres e.g., at Biggin Hill, so taking their services to where the children live and reducing the risk of spreading COVID around the borough.
- 3.5.15 During the pandemic all six of Bromley's Children and Family Centres achieved their Healthy Early Years London Silver Award; we were 6 of 9 Silver awards in Bromley, a massive achievement. There were only 130 Silver Awards across all settings across all local authorities in London. This work was support by Bromley's Early Years Quality Team (EYQT) Lead who provided support and audited our applications. Our ambition to achieve Gold has been place on hold as Government are now focusing on the development of other areas of Early Years practice, and so we are now working with our colleagues in the EYQT to identify which of these to focus our energy on. We continue to monitor and embed our Silver Award good practice which includes work that links to Bromley's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).
- 3.5.16 We have also taken time to reflect on the issues that have presented during the last 24 months. The question of diversity and inclusion and making this real has been a key focus. We embraced the challenges, reviewed our resources and where necessary updated these to reflect our communities in Bromley an example being the creation of YouTube videos promoting storytelling in a range of languages.
- 3.5.17 Our Social Media presence has grown from strength to strength; we have in excess of 1,790 Facebook followers, and in excess of 1,050 Instagram followers. We have published in excess of 700 posts on Facebook and 381 in Instagram. During the pandemic we have launched our YouTube Channel and have posted 28 videos. We have used our social media platforms to re-post information, advice and guidance from Public Health, specific support services such as Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid for DVA support and increased our video /play activity library. Our 'Booking your Learn and Play' post reached 1,630 people and our videos have had over 3,500 hits. In addition to this, we used these platforms to promote and demonstrate the local authority's commitment to all our residents e.g., during October, for Black History Month, we posted daily in Facebook and Instagram information on unsung historical and current day achievers to educate and inspire.
- 3.5.18 During the pandemic we developed with colleagues in Bromley Adult Education College and run a range of safe bubble activities e.g., cookery, to run in the Children and Family centres

(although not during T5) for isolated and vulnerable families. Over time and in line with Government restrictions, we have increased the offer of activities in the Children and Family Centres and see growth in our footfall, demonstrating that families wanted, and needed, to return to direct delivery. This has been managed in a COVID safe way and we will start the next phase with increased capacity after the Easter break.

- 3.5.19 During this period, we have supported colleagues from a range of services both within the council and partner agencies to deliver in a safe way (not during T5), face to face support to children and families especially during the summer and at other holiday periods. Some of those we have worked with are;
- CSC Children Looked After Team; activities including NEET including holiday and out of hours sessions into the evening
  - CSC Children with Disabilities Team; activities including their Summer Scheme
  - Partners delivering activities for children with ASD
  - Hidden Harm Worker; by appointment only – appointments with young people
  - CSC Safeguarding Teams; undertaking Parenting Capacity Assessments
  - CSC ASYE Group; a safe space for weekly group Supervision sessions
  - CSC Social workers and our own staff; a safe space for face-to-face meetings with families to help mitigate COVID risks whilst enabling eyes-on the children; and
  - Public Health: providing a site which was used as COVID Vaccination Centres for targeted vaccination drive in Biggin Hill and will be supporting the roll out of vaccinations for children aged 5-11 across all six Children and Family Centres.
- 3.5.20 We have developed and launched a refreshed Advisory Board for the Children and Family Centres. This has increased parental involvement as well as professionals' involvement. We have used Survey Monkey to support parents to engage and 26 actively engaged in our initial Board using this option. This continued throughout the pandemic in a virtual environment, and it is highly probably that this will remain as it enabled broader representation. Families' views are still being sought via direct engagement using more formalised feedback sessions, Survey Monkey questionnaires and post-activities feedback.
- 3.5.21 We developed and introduced a 'Light Touch Assessment' for our Children and Family Centre Support Officers to better understand and support families on their caseloads. This has enabled better identification of issues at an earlier point in time for the family and families' feedback has been positive, this new approach is making a difference. Added to this, we provided the helpline service.
- 3.5.22 Two quotes from parents being supported via Light Touch caseloads held by the Children and Family Centre Support Officer (CFCSO);

*'It was nice staff and very helpful for me and SON. Also want to thank you CFCSO personally as you made me feel so comfy and I knew that someone is out there that will call and ask how I'm and that's what I needed, someone to know that I exist. I can't thank you enough the way you talked to me and the soft tone'.*

*'I wanted to say a massive thank you for our help last week. When you first rang me you could tell the stress levels were high and from that day you never gave up on me. My journey is still tough and have a long way to go with baby coming and being alone but getting me out of the previous property was the best thing that's happened to us for a while. I don't know what I could have done without your help and*

*for that I will never forget you, I mean it from the bottom of my heart. The calls and even checking on me after I moved I know it's your job but you went the extra mile for a stranger I felt your motherly love, something I have been yearning for since my sister passed away. Thank you so much CFCSO, God Bless you. Love MUM and Bump'*

- 3.5.23 We continue to develop the service and to look for ways to enhance, adapt and deliver support to our families. We reopened for limited group sessions in September 2021 and are expanding this further in April 2022 as we return to larger group sessions and some drop-ins, whilst still adapting and capping attendance to ensure this is delivered in a COVID safe way in line with the advice and guidance of Public Health colleagues and the Government's lifting of domestic restrictions.
- 3.5.24 Our data for 2019/20 was on track to reach our highest-ever recorded levels however due to COVID, we were closed for the last two weeks of March 2020 which impacted on our registrations and footfall (visits). Data shows that 2020/21 was an exceptional year due to COVID and initially non-site-based support was not captured e.g., doorstep drops, but data for 2021/22 shows site visits are now beginning to increase.
- 3.5.25 *Registration data* – this data shows new registrations only. Once you register, you are registered for life or until you ask us to remove your records. If someone has another child, that child needs to be registered but the existing registered family members do not. Therefore, each new registration is a unique person. Data shows in 2019/20 there were in excess of 9,650 new registrations across the six Children and Family Centres, but due to COVID this dropped to just 1,819 in 2020/21. Data shows this has dramatically increased during 2021/22 to 5,340 as we have flexed our capacity whilst remaining within COVID safety measures.
- 3.5.26 *Footfall data* – this data shows visits to the Children and Family Centres. One person visiting 10 times is 10 visits/ 1 unique service user, whereas 10 people each visiting once is 10 visits/ 10 unique service users. Data shows in 2019/20 there were in excess of 98,000 visits across the six Children and Family Centres by over 24,500 service users. Due to COVID this dropped to just 6,668 visits by 3,355 unique service users in 2020/21. Data shows this has dramatically increased during 2021/22 to 28,280 visits by 11,404 unique service users as we have flexed our capacity whilst remaining within COVID safety measures.
- 3.5.27 We have undertaken a massive Capital Works programme during the pandemic which has included two streams: outside play spaces and internal works. Additional works have also been undertaken to other sites to ensure any maintenance that could be undertaken during this quieter period was also completed.
- 3.5.28 The refurbishment of the children's outside play spaces in Biggin Hill Children and Family Centre, Community Vision Children and Family Centre and Castlecombe Children and Family Centre have been completed and are in use by the children in our creches and attending our other activities.
- 3.5.29 The internal works programme focuses on two sites: Blenheim Children and Family Centre and Cotmandene Children and Family Centre. The works in Blenheim are to bring the site in line with the council's duty under the Equality Act to ensure the site is accessible. The works in Cotmandene are to extend the current and very small site into the empty and derelict shop next door. Contractors have been appointed and works will commence in May 2022 with a completion date of Autumn 2022.

## **3.6 Family Support and Parenting Practitioner Team**

- 3.6.1 Family Support services have continued uninterrupted. Visiting to families continued throughout the pandemic where safe to do so, these have been in person visits with appropriate PPE; in the family home, the Children and Family Centres, in Schools and other community venues both inside and outside, but always in accordance with the COVID safe practice guidance at that time. Where this has not been possible, virtual visits have been used, with staff developing creative ways to undertake direct work during these virtual visits.
- 3.6.2 Data shows that we received our highest ever number of referrals for support for our Family Support and Parenting Practitioner Team in 2019/20 at 977. Despite COVID this extremely high rate of referrals for support was mirrored in 2020/21 with 971 referrals, and likewise in 2021/22 with 947 referrals.
- 3.6.3 Data shows that the highest number of referrals into the service are from Children's Social Care. Normally we would expect Schools to be the second highest source of referrals but in 2020/21 Schools' referrals drop which was to be expected with the challenges faced by schools during the height of the pandemic. In 2021/22 the normal pattern of referrals returned with Schools being the second highest source.
- 3.6.4 We actively seek feedback from families both during and after the support has ended. The families continue to be very open and share with us their feedback on the support they have received.
- 3.6.5 This is a quoted from the feedback from one parent during the pandemic;
- 'The intervention are very helpful, I achieved more than my goals. The support are wonderful helps myself too much also help me dealing with a lot issues when I really need. FSPP are exceptional she helps me rebuild my strength also helps me continues to believe in hope in a moment I felt totally alone. I have no words to describe how FSPP are important in this transition of my life I was in totally depression caused by a domestic violence also other problems too but she makes me believe there's always a way to continues and don't give up all my progress I give to her. Thank you very much for EVERYTHING!!!!'*
- 3.6.6 The work of the Family Support and Parenting Practitioner Team is the core work used for the Supporting Families Grant (previously known as Tackling Troubled Families Grant). This grant is a Payment by Result grant. This process is robust and Internal Audit are required to verify all claims to ensure that the outcomes claimed for are appropriate and evidenced. Throughout the entire Grant programme, Bromley has achieved all the targets set by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in respect of both 'attaching' families and 'turning families around'. This has continued throughout COVID, and we have achieved all targets for 2020/21 and 2021/22. This has resulted in Bromley being able to draw down the full grant allocation.
- 3.6.7 We track the number of families we support, and the number of times those families come back to us for more support. Our tracking runs from 1 April 2012 to the current day. This provides us with data over the past 10 years and demonstrates the effectiveness of the work we are doing with families. Data shows we have worked with in excess of 4,300 families and supported in excess of 5,800 cycles of support. Of these 5,805 cycles of support our impact has been very positive with 93% of families receiving no more than 2 cycles - in fact, 75% (3,238) families have only received one cycle of support in the 10 years we have been tracking.
- 3.6.8 In addition to this, our embedded Employment Advisors, who are loaned to us full time by the Department for Work and Pensions from the Job Centre Plus Team in Bromley have continued

to work alongside the team and support the families with employment and skills opportunities as well as benefit checks to ensure that the local authority is not having to provide for where there is existing funding available via central Government.

### **3.7 Parenting Offer**

- 3.7.1 Unfortunately, our normal level of classroom delivery of parenting courses was not possible due to COVID restrictions for a considerable part of the last 24 months. As COVID restrictions lessened we reintroduced classroom delivery, focusing on parenting in relation to children with ASC and ADHD, however this left a gap in our core provision.
- 3.7.2 In order to better support the wider parenting population, we developed and introduced an interim solution, a Parenting Hotline. The hotline is operational Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm, with answerphone for calls outside this window. We have advertised by word of mouth and Facebook/Instagram as well as via emails to colleagues and partner agencies. The service is being used and has become a route for parents to self-refer into the FSPP Team. This will remain in place as it has proved to be a better use of staff time than hosting a weekly 'drop-in' at each Children and Family Centre and it extends the service for our residents from a weekly drop-in to daily.
- 3.7.3 During this period, we have also developed 18 different online parenting standalone seminars covering a number of topics; Boundaries, Relationships, Communications, New to Parenting ('NAP'), ASC bedtime, ASC anxiety, Parenting Styles. More seminars are being developed and prioritised by parental requests.
- 3.7.4 We have also developed 2 virtual 'short-course' options, which require a little more commitment from a parent as they span 4 and 5 weeks, for some of our most popular parenting programmes such as the New Forest Parenting Programme ('NFPP') for parents of children with /likely to have ADHD, and New at Parenting ('NAP') for new parents.
- 3.7.5 Since introducing online parenting in October 2020 and until 31 March 2022, we have run 151 online seminars and short courses, which equated to 261 online sessions of virtual parenting.
- 3.7.6 In addition to the virtual offer, we ran a further 24 face-to-face parenting courses out of the Children and Family Centres in a COVID safe environment, covering 9 different courses. Courses vary in length from 4 weeks to 13 weeks. Data shows the retention of parents on these courses is high.
- 3.7.7 Data shows that the parenting seminars, short courses, and face-to-face courses' sessions were attended by in excess of 2,180 attendees in the two years 2020/21 and 2021/2022.
- 3.7.8 Due to the success of this mixed delivery model, including the introduction of online sessions, we have already committed to continue this model and have 30 online seminars, 3 online short courses and 9 face-to-face courses scheduled just in Quarter1 of 2022/23.

### **3.8 CAF Team (Common Assessment Framework)**

- 3.8.1 The CAF Team have continued to offer their full range of services including contributing to the MASH team and supporting Lead Professionals whether in-house, school-based or from other partners agencies. We have altered the model to ensure EIFS is represented in MASH throughout the week which enables participation in the morning MASH partners' meeting.
- 3.8.2 As might be expected, the number of CAF logged with the CAF Team dipped in the height of the pandemic from 591 in 2019/20 to 487 in 2020/21. We have seen a resurgence in 2021/22

with 537 CAF being logged. As at 31 March 2022 there were 598 live CAF for children and young people across Bromley.

3.8.3 In non-COVID times, the predominate author of CAF are education settings, which is to be expected as CAF are early help assessments and completed by the professionals, often at universal level, working with children and young people. As a borough we have over 100 schools and therefore this is the pattern we would expect to see, followed by Bromley Children Project Family Support and Parenting Practitioners and step-downs from statutory social care. However, during the height of the pandemic, when schools were having to adjust to the huge challenges of keeping children and staff safe, whilst still providing an education, this balance swapped. During 2021/22 we have seen this pattern start to revert.

3.8.4 Where face to face Team Around the Child meetings have been safely arranged by the Lead professional, e.g., in some schools, and the CAF team have been asked to Chair, these meetings have gone ahead. We saw an initial reduction in these requests but as Schools adapted to virtual and limited on-site delivery but have since returned to similar levels; 238 in 2019/20, 162 in 2020/21, and 213 in 2021/22. Feedback shows that this support is beneficial. The first two examples are from Schools/Professionals and the third is from a parent;

*'First of all, thank you for your help yesterday, you and W were amazing, that was a much more productive meeting.'*

*'In my experience TAC meetings are much more productive and effective when they are chaired by a member of the CAF Team'*

*'I did not want it to go ahead, as I thought it was just a tick box exercise – CAF M persuaded me to stay. Thank you, it was actually worthwhile.'*

3.8.5 Where Lead professionals have sought CAF support and been unable to host a virtual TAC Meeting, the CAF team have organised and hosted these to ensure that the CAF plan remains focused and on track.

3.8.6 The CAF training offer has continued with all training moving to a virtual platform. This has enabled new staff joining the wider Children's workforce to access and understand the 'early help' approach used in Bromley. School requests for CAF training saw a dip during the early COVID period but we are now being approached for this and providing it in a responsive way. During 2020/21 we delivered 11 CAF training sessions to Health Visitors, various schools, and alternative provisions, BDAS, Home and Hospital Tuition service. During 2021/22 we delivered a further 11 sessions to a similar cohort of organisations as well as 58 private voluntary and independent pre-schools and nurseries.

3.8.7 CAF is part of the Multi Agency Partnership Events ('MAPE's) along with the wider EIFS and MASH services. During COVID these sessions continued and were well attended.

### **3.9 Family Contact Centres now known as Children's Contact Centres**

3.9.1 Work was undertaken with support from the central COVID Team to make both of our Children's Contact Centres COVID safe. The measures in place were approved and resulted in the sites reopening to staff and families to enable safe supervised contact to resume from July 2020. The provision of supervised contact continued throughout this period with the exception of T5, when virtual contact arrangements were put in place.

3.9.2 During the initial COVID Lockdown, staff were redirected to support the COVID Helpline teams.

- 3.9.3 During the last 14 months the service also went through a restructure. This restructure formed part of the wider Bromley Transformation work. The aim of the restructure was to enhance the service provided to our children by extending the operating hours, improving the premises, and identifying quiet times where there is the opportunity to sell unused space and officer time to generate income to offset the cost of providing this statutory service. The restructure was approved, and authorisation given to proceed with implementing it. We are in the process of recruiting to the additional posts and vacancies.
- 3.9.4 During 2021/22, without formally promoting the 'sold' element we generated £3,200 income to off-set against the service's running costs. Work continues to recruit to the vacancies, and we anticipate being fully staffed this year and increasing our income generation.

### **3.10 Information Advice and Support Service**

- 3.10.1 Business as usual has continued and the IASS team have continued to support families in their meetings with professionals and at SENDIST Tribunals. This has been both virtually and in person. Our team of five Independent Volunteer Supporters have also continued to give up their time, energy, and expertise to support our families.
- 3.10.2 As part of a grant from the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), and in order to achieve the statutory 'minimum standards' the team have been developing a website and during COVID this important innovation has continued. The site [www.bromleyiass.org.uk](http://www.bromleyiass.org.uk) went live last year and has been recognised as a beacon of best practice by the CDC.
- 3.10.3 This has been a challenging year as over the course of 15 months, two members of our small team of four left to pursue studies outside of SEND. Recruitment challenges have resulted in a reduced offer, but this has been mitigated by the website and the fantastic Independent Volunteer Supporters (IVS) team.
- 3.10.4 Work continues to develop the website and content further, as our residents and professionals have told us how valuable and useful it has been. We have committed to add information to the website to support the SEND Governance Board Action Plan.
- 3.10.5 During the last 12 months we have focused on practice and introduced a triage and key worker model to the service. This has improved management oversight and enabled trends to be identified early.
- 3.10.6 We re-launched the Information Advice and Support Service Steering Group. Membership is drawn from across the relevant partners and agencies working with children and young people who have SEND. This provides the service with challenge and support whilst maintaining the statutorily required arms-length impartiality to the Local Authority.
- 3.10.7 We receive a lot of feedback from parents and carers; these are just three examples related to finding a suitable educational setting for some of our children and young people with SEND. The first two are from parents and the third is from a School SENCO.

*'Just wanted to say thank you to you, and IASS and especially to (IVS) for all the support and advice. C has started at X College today. I'm happy and sad all at the same time. My heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported me in getting him into the right placement xx'*

*'I wanted to let you know how well H is getting on at Z College and to thank you once again for all your help and support in making this happen. I believe the setting and the residential status is so good and empowering for H and he seems to love it. He does get home sick but in the last half term he was keen to go back to college which was really encouraging for us... We would not be in the position and he would*

*not be getting this experience if it was not for your help and support in this matter. Thank you once again'*

*'I just wanted to email to say a huge thank you for supporting N. I am so relieved that DL has a place at a school that will really meet her needs.'*

### **3.11 Domestic Abuse**

- 3.11.1 Prior to and during COVID an enormous amount of development work has been undertaken to reinvigorate and develop Bromley's offer in relation to Domestic Abuse ('DA'). A number of significant milestones have been achieved;
- Introduction of the Blue Butterfly cards to support victims of DA – 10,000 were produced and distributed across the wider partner workforce for professionals to give to victims/survivors, and a further 10,000 have been produced ready for distribution.
  - A Domestic Abuse Intergenerational Strategy was launched in 2021 in which partner agencies signed up to a shared commitment to tackle DA in Bromley.
  - A regular DA Newsletter has been introduced; we are on issue 6
  - A new DA Strategic Board and DA Operational Forum have been set up, membership agreed and are operational.
  - A successful bid in partnership with MPS South BCU and Croydon, Bromley, and Sutton LAs brought a new perpetrator intervention 'DRIVE' to Bromley in February 2021 and the funding for this has been extended to March 2023.
  - A new Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Steering Group has been set-up and is operational. The key focus for this is currently to work through the recommendations from the Safe Lives Improvement Action Plan.
- 3.11.2 There is more work to be achieved in relation to our DA social media presence, the Local Authority's website, and the promotion of other related schemes led on by our colleagues in Public Protection such as the wider Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda, the Night Safety Charter, and other such schemes following the horrific murders of women at the hands of men.
- 3.11.3 'CODA' Children Overcoming Domestic Abuse; EIFS is providing child focused support sessions for children who have witnessed DA against their primary female carer, an evidence based licenced programme overseen by the charitable organisation 'AVA' (Against Violence and Abuse).
- 3.11.4 The CODA programme has been running for over 5 years. Schools work in partnership to enable the children to attend these sessions.
- 3.11.5 Parents have told us that this programme is making a real difference to their lives and the lives of their children. Here are three examples of the type of feedback received during the courses which ran during 2021/22.

*'I am 3 years into my journey and I can honestly say this has been the best support we have had so far. This has been the most therapeutic, supportive and cathartic thing we have done over our three year journey. It has really helped me and the kids, the boys have loved coming every week and it has just been the greatest. Thank you so much and we will miss our Monday morning group.'*

*'I tell everyone about BCP as this is needed in every school, you guys are the very best.'*

*'The work you guys do is amazing, more people need to know about this support and be accessing it because it has done so much for us as a family and we are so grateful'*

3.11.6 Other agencies are also working with our children and young people in schools and other settings. We have not yet managed to persuade those agencies to share their data and success stories. This is a continuing piece of work for the DA Strategic Lead.

### **3.12 Reducing Parental Conflict Programme**

3.12.1 Stepping in earlier, to help people identify that their relationship is not healthy, that the conflict they expose one another to could develop into domestic abuse, can harm their own mental wellbeing, and damage their children is our goal. The end of the road does not have to be a domestic abuse relationship, and conversely, domestic abuse happens without going through a 'safe enough' parental conflict stage.

3.12.2 Our initial funding was to raise awareness about the concept of Reducing Parental Conflict 'RPC'. This training is really important in terms of ensuring staff can identify the difference between RPC and domestic abuse 'DA' and make appropriate decisions in terms of the correct pathway to support a family where there is parental conflict and a family where there is domestic abuse.

3.12.3 Another successful bid brought funding into Bromley to introduce the concept of Reducing Parental Conflict, to roll out a training programme for professionals to better understand the sign and symptoms, to offer tools and strategies to work with families to help them to alter their pathway.

3.12.4 This funding has enabled us to develop tools and strategies which support the parents to change their behaviour, recognise the impact on their children and themselves, and change the potential outcome. Reducing Parental Conflict aims to prevent conflict developing into the more harmful and longer lasting impactful domestic abuse cycle.

3.12.5 We have complimented this with a website [www.bromleyparentinghub.info](http://www.bromleyparentinghub.info) which is free to access for families and professionals, sharing the tools and strategies, and encouraging families to look at their own lives and challenge themselves to change – with support.

3.12.6 To date we have run four 'Train the Trainer' courses offering 80 places to all staff and partners working with families with the intention that those staff will then disseminate this training within their own teams and agencies. Of these 22 signed up to become 'Champions'.

3.12.7 This is not easy topic to raise with families. We have created a Champions' Network to support professionals working with families, to develop skills and discuss practice. The inaugural meeting was held in Spring 2022 and 18 of the 22 initial Champion Cohort attended.

3.12.8 In addition, we have developed a set of resources for staff to access to support interventions with families and for families to access themselves.

3.12.9 Further funding has been confirmed for 2022/25 to extend this work further. The ambition being to embed this concept in the practice of all agencies, professionals, and volunteers, working with families.

3.12.10 This additional funding is also being used to develop a short 4-week course to deliver this in accessible format directly to parents through the Children and Family Centres existing parenting support offer.

### **3.13 General developments**

- 3.13.1 Our Intelligence and Operations Team have been upskilling everyone to effectively undertake and implement a new, engaging, fresh digital media environment for families to engage with and to improve and streamline our public facing (including professionals) communications, resources, and processes. Examples of this are the installation of SMART Board technology in our Children and Family Centres, and 'Barcoding' to streamline our entry systems to improve data collection and accuracy and minimise GDPR risks whilst maintaining Health and Safety and Safeguarding requirements.
- 3.13.2 As a service, EIFS has achieved the Stop Loan Sharks Partner Award in January 2022.
- 3.13.3 As a service we recognise the importance of our staff without whom we would not have managed to deliver the services detailed in this paper. We have seen staff achieve promotions within and beyond the Service, some have stepped out for a period to have babies or to support the COVID teams, and several have retired after long service with Bromley. We have welcomed a number of new staff into the Team during the past year who have already become valuable team members.
- 3.13.4 Recognising the need to keep our staff, the face of Bromley, relevant and supported, we have continued with our Whole Service Training days which moved to a virtual platform during COVID. We have run this in October 2020, April 2021, and October 2021 and most recently in April 2022. Over 100 of the team successfully participated each event. We ran multiple sessions which included self-care for staff as well as practice workshops by working with partners across the council and other key partner agencies who supported this by delivering sessions in addition to our in-house led sessions; some examples being Unconscious Bias, Prevent, new LBB SharePoint, Drug and Alcohol misuse, Sibling Sexual Abuse, Illegal Money Lending, and Voice of the Child.
- 3.13.5 We have shared Mental Health support and information across the team; we have several trained MH1stAiders, and staff receive a positive affirmation email several times a week organised by one of our Administrative Officers.
- 3.13.6 We have undertaken a self-assessment to reflect on the issues that have presented during the last 12 months. The question of diversity and inclusion and making this real has been a key focus. We embraced the challenges, reviewed our resources and where necessary updated these to reflect our communities in Bromley. We wanted this to be visual for the families we are supporting. A very visual example being the use of 'wallpaper virtual meetings' and our Facebook and Instagram posts throughout October every day, in recognition of Black History Month, we posted information on unsung historical and current day achievers to educate and inspire.
- 3.13.7 Our engagement events for colleagues across Education, Health and Pre-school/Nursery settings (EEE, HEE, and PEE respectively) are all now delivered on-line and run each term. Alongside this our Introduction to EIFS monthly sessions, for anyone working within the wider children and families workforce in Bromley, have continued on-line. In addition, we run bespoke sessions for the commissioned provider for the 0-19 Health Service, and in addition to this, to our MASH, Referral and Assessment, Safeguarding and Care Planning, and Youth Justice services.
- 3.13.8 In addition to the engagement events for targeted audiences described in 3.13.7, we have continued to deliver monthly on-line Early Intervention and Family Support Information Sessions which are bookable via Eventbrite. We have had a steady flow of attendance at these throughout the past 24 months.

- 3.13.9 During COVID we have developed a Single Point of Contact 'SPOC' model for our colleagues in Children's Social Care as well as all the schools across Bromley's educational landscape. In addition to this we have expanded to include partner agencies and this work is continuing, for example Change Grow Live, Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid, Probation Services. This model is working well with increased communication, bespoke training, improved referrals, and frequent case discussions. Feedback has been very positive and of a similar vein;

*'This has been really useful, in particular the surgeries to discuss individual children and getting the right support at the right time from the right place'*

*'The bespoke training has been so useful and improved the step-down/step-up process between our services. Really enjoying the closer working relationship and see it is making a difference'*

- 3.13.10 Multi Agency Partnership Events 'MAPE' which focused on the front door to family support, called "Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility" were introduced in 2016. These are delivered in partnership by two Team Managers from Early Intervention and the Group Manager for the MASH Service. These have run since 2016 and are still fully booked, but now run virtually rather than face to face, and 6 times a year.
- 3.13.11 During 2021/22 six sessions were delivered and 103 people completed the training. A further 50 people booked but did not attend.
- 3.13.12 Feedback from participants has always been positive and included how beneficial participants have found learning together in a multi-agency discussion format, working a case through the thresholds of need from early help and CAF through to targeted Early Intervention and into statutory Social Care via the MASH. Participants frequently share their relief at having an opportunity to work through a 'case' completing the paperwork for each stage with both support and challenge from the facilitator team.
- 3.13.13 During 2020, and in partnership with Bromley's Education Safeguarding Officer (BESO) in CSC Quality and Improvement service, we initiated targeted project in response to identified issues with a number of schools in respect of their safeguarding, early help, and CAF practice. 10 schools were identified for a targeted response. Working in conjunction with BESO each school was contacted and offered free training around CAF, BCP and safeguarding thresholds at a time of their choosing. Many schools welcomed the support and have been removed from the Top Ten list as their working relationship with EIFS has improved significantly. Each of the targeted schools has been made aware of their Single Point of Contact (SPOC) within EIFS and has been offered termly surgeries to discuss any areas of concern. Due to the success of this project this work remains ongoing and has been expanded to include other schools who may benefit from being supported to improve their safeguarding pathway by offering a robust early help response to divert children from the need for Children's Social Care. In addition to this we have extended the MAPE offer and are now also delivering a bespoke MAPE targeted to schools where additional learning would be helpful.
- 3.13.14 Work has been undertaken to draft an Early Help Strategy. There will be a separate paper on the Early Help Strategy which will come to PDS.

### **3.14 Future focus**

- 3.14.1 We have many plans for the development of the services within EIFS. Some will be quick wins and others will take careful development and require co-production. The impact of COVID and the current economic challenges faced by families have resulted in high demand and we do not anticipate this changing. The services are already working at capacity, but we

are facing the challenge of identifying any available opportunities to adapt to help address some of the capacity challenges we face. The following highlights just one or two focused pieces of work for each of the service areas within EIFS.

#### 3.14.2 Children and Family Centres

- a) Streamlining our front facing processes to make it quicker and easier for service users and reduces the time spent on administration, e.g., online registration portal, online activity bookings.
- b) Expanding our outreach to the Gypsy Romany and Traveller Communities in Bromley to encompass the sites across the south of the borough.

#### 3.14.3 Family Support and Parenting Practitioner

- a) Developing the existing assessment tool to include the Reducing Parental Conflict and Contextualised Safeguarding models.
- b) Working with our embedded Job Centre Plus Employment Advisors and other partners such as Clarion's Love London Working team, to ensure we are providing the best possible advice and support e.g., checking benefits and providing more employment opportunities and training.

#### 3.14.4 Parenting offer

- a) Developing additional parenting courses to meet the needs of Bromley's residents and utilising the virtual reality training tools to enhance the experience and learning of participants.
- b) Continuing with the mixed deliver approach to provide all parents and carers with the opportunity to access parenting courses and seminars.

#### 3.14.5 CAF

- a) Undertake a review of the CAF service.
- b) Explore options to increase the online offer e.g., automated CAF registers, development of E-Learning guidance.

#### 3.14.6 Children's Contact Centres

- a) To further develop the 'sold' element of this service to other local authorities and private users when not being used by our own families, to increase the income generation which can be used to offset running costs.
- b) To review the capital needs for the Orpington site and progress the redevelopment of our premises in order become Equality Act 2010 compliant for both staff and service users.

#### 3.14.7 Information Advice and Support Service

- a) Further develop the range of material available to service users on our website in a range of different media formats.
- b) Undertake a focused recruitment exercise to increase the number of Independent Volunteer Supporters (IVS) in the Team.

#### 3.14.8 Domestic Abuse

- a) Complete the procurement exercise for DA victim survivor services for 2022/23, and as part of this exercise review the existing provision and whether this meets the needs within the borough.

- b) To develop the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference panel, MARAC, to ensure it is fit for purpose and meets the challenges outlined in the SafeLives Improvement Action Plan.

#### 3.14.9 Reducing Parental Conflict

- a) Recognising the important and value of the RPC agenda, and the focus on communication, we will embed the learning for parents and carers in to all our existing parenting delivery.
- b) Using the funding for the coming 3 years, we will be increasing the strategic awareness and requesting buy-in to the RPC ethos across all departments within the council, partner agencies and professionals working with families.

#### 3.14.10 General

- a) Following on from the work undertaken to support the Ukrainian Hub, we will look at ways to develop tools and resources in formats which are easier to translate using universally available tools
- b) We are reviewing the data we collect, collate and present to reflect the changes in service delivery models, such as online delivery.
- c) We will be using electronic tools to enhance and improve our outreach and capture of the voice of our service users, parents, carers, and children as well as other professionals.
- d) We will be presenting a separate paper on the Early Help Strategy following the May 2022 elections.

### **4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

- 4.1 Our most vulnerable families and their children have continued to be supported by EIFS services throughout the COVID Pandemic, and new and different ways of both engaging and supporting them have been trialled, and where effective introduced.
- 4.2 There is always more that we can do, and the wider EIFS will continue to look for and exploit available opportunities to expand the reach and range of support that can be offered. EIFS have continued with the 'needs-led' approach, driven by what our families are telling us they need to ensure our resources are best placed and not wasted.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 All of the work outlined in this paper has been achieved within the existing budget and staffing allocations, or through successful bids such as Capital Bid for the development of some of our sites and grant bids to external funders e.g., MOPAC for the 'Drive' programme and DWP for the Reducing Parental Conflict programme.
- 5.2 There is has been no additional cost to the local authority.

### **6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 All of the work outlined in this paper has been achieved within the existing establishment.
- 6.2 All staff have been working throughout COVID and for a small minority, where there was a period of inactivity e.g., during National Lockdowns in March/April 2020, these staff were

redirected to support the various COVID Helpline teams set up by the local authority. All staff had returned to their substantive roles by July 2020.

6.3 All staff have complied with COVID safety requirements and measures to ensure their safety and that of our families (service users) and delivery partners

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	POLICY IMPLICATIONS LEGAL IMPLICATIONS PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS
<b>Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)</b>	NONE