

Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 17th November 2022

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

Title: EARLY HELP STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN (AGED FROM
BIRTH TO 18) AND THEIR FAMILIES. OUR VISION FOR 2030

Contact Officer: Rachel Dunley,
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Chief Officer: Richard Baldwin, Director; Children Education and Families

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report is an information briefing on development and distribution of Bromley's Early Help Strategy for Children (aged from birth to 18) and their families. Our Vision for 2030"
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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: No Executive decision.
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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. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The partners of the Children's Executive Board are committed to improving the life chances for all children and young people in Bromley through the joint planning, commissioning, and delivery of services. As a partnership we are passionate about and remain jointly accountable for, improving outcomes and challenging the barriers children and young people face.
- 3.2 The "*Early Help Strategy for Children (aged from birth to 18) and their families; Our Vision for 2030*", ('Early Help Strategy') has been developed over the past 12 months, working closely in with colleagues across the Council and our key partners, and is designed to link into existing and developing strategies and plans. The foremost of which being the Children and Young People Plan 2021-24.
- 3.3 Our refreshed Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) 2021-24 has five key priority areas and an action plan to monitor our progress.
- ✓ Priority 1: Targeted early intervention and good universal services
 - ✓ Priority 2: Safeguarding children and adolescents
 - ✓ Priority 3: Being the best corporate parents
 - ✓ Priority 4: Challenging disproportionality
 - ✓ Priority 5: Engaging with children, young people and families
- 3.1 At each Children Executive Board thematic priority reports are presented on key areas of delivery, enabling our CYPP to be robustly monitored.

4. COMMENTARY

- 4.1 This report provides an update against the theme of *Priority 1: Targeted early intervention and good universal services* within the CYPP.
- 4.2 The Early Help Strategy (Appendix 1 to this report) the provides our vision for 2030. It has been produced by the Council to:
- a) Illustrate the current position of early help across the borough
 - b) Set out a vision for the medium-term for the early help ecosystem across our borough
 - c) Clarify to our families and professionals what is expected from early help and how it will support them
- 4.3 We have written this strategy at a time when the country is emerging from a global pandemic that has significantly impacted on the childhood of our young residents. Like all local authorities, we continue to manage the ongoing change and challenges on us as we transition from pandemic to endemic and we begin to live, work, and learn with the virus in our community. The actions set out in this strategy will help us do that.
- 4.4 By early help we mean the total support that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Our early help services are focused on providing the right help when our families need it, whatever the age of the child. Bromley has well-established and mature early help arrangements in place which make a difference to children and families. At the heart of this is our Early Intervention and Family Support (EIFS) Service.
- 4.5 When we talk about early help, it is easy to think that it simply relates to the early years of the child; however, this is far from the actual situation. Early help goes from pre-birth all the way through the life of the child, at all life phases.

- 4.6 Our early help approach is shaped around our commitment of shifting the balance of power, so our work is increasingly family-led and not led by practitioners. An element of this involves families being supported to come together to utilise their own resources and strengths to overcome their challenges.
- 4.7 Quality work with families already takes place across Bromley, day in and day out, by schools, health services, children and family centres, early years' settings, community services and support, and a range of other agencies and services.

5. OUR VISION FOR 2030

- 5.1 This strategy is rightly ambitious for us and for our children. The targets we have set out describing what our early help offer will look in 2030 will challenge us; however, by working together with our partners, our families, and our children, we are confident that they can all be achieved.
- 5.2 Every day we are collectively working to make Bromley an excellent place for children to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home. We have a clear dream which will help us to achieve this:

“Our early help ecosystem makes sure that every child in Bromley has a bright, safe and optimistic future”

- 5.3 During the lifetime of this strategy, we will be working to achieve four interlocking ambitions. Each ambition is focused on one of the four quadrants that make up our early help model - our children, our families, our practitioners and our resources:
- 5.4 Our four ambitions are:
- a. Our children experience loving and safe homes with consistent and positive parenting which nurtures them and helps them flourish
 - b. Our families are informed about the range of services and support available to them, and how to use them when they need it, so they can be in control of their own lives
 - c. Our practitioners work within a culture that embraces relational and compassionate practice where the strengths of our families are understood and built upon
 - d. Our resources are focused on providing responsive, dynamic, and holistic integrated services across health, education and social care which identify need and provide support at the earliest opportunity to meet needs and prevent escalation of concern

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Following the feedback from Members we will update the Early Help Strategy to reflect the amendments and alterations proposed.
- 6.2 The strategy will then be endorsed by the Council's Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families, after which we will undertake a communication programme to raise awareness across the workforce within the Council, key Partners, the wider community workforce, and our residents.

7. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

- 7.1 The Early Help Strategy impacts on all families including our most vulnerable families and their children. Families' lives are not static and the needs of families change as they grow, evolve and become exposed to new and challenging life experiences. Some families will require more support than others, across a range of needs and over a variety of timescales.
- 7.2 If we have a robust early help model, and families are able to build resilience and develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to face challenges, learn from them, and have the self-efficacy to try to resolve and find workable solutions, we will reduced the potential additional burden on other services in the future. There will always be a need for support, information, guidance and intervention, but intervening early is more effective, cheaper and over time has the power to alter the future, and reduce the reliance by our current children and young people when they become adults and parents themselves.
- 7.3 There is always more that we can do, and early help cannot stand still. The need to evolve and develop, to look for and exploit available opportunities to expand the reach and range of support that can be offered is essential. Partnership working, across the Council, key partners and the wider workforce is required. A focus on being family-led and 'needs-led' where we are driven by what our families are telling us they need is essential to ensure our resources are best placed and not wasted.

Non-Applicable Sections:	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS POLICY IMPLICATIONS LEGAL IMPLICATIONS PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	NONE