

Ensuring Excellence for Barnet's Early Years

April 2013



This document will be reviewed in the financial year 2013/14

Contents

Introduction	4
Our vision	5
National context	6
Barnet context: key challenges and opportunities	7
Vulnerable groups	8
Principles and outcomes	9
Managing the supply and sufficiency of provision	10
Ensuring high quality provision	11
Maximising early intervention and prevention	12
Integrating services to reduce social and health inequalities	13
Working in partnership with families	14
Statutory requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage.	14
Embedding inclusion and support for those with additional needs	16
Focusing support around key transition points	17

Introduction

**Dear Colleagues,
Delivering Excellence
in Barnet's Early Years
2013 builds on the
partnership priorities
of the Barnet Children
and Young People Plan
(2013 - 2016), the Councils
Education Strategy (2013 –
2016) and the NHS 'Social
and Emotional Wellbeing:
Early Years' guidance,
setting a more detailed
strategic direction of the
council's approach to early
years over the next
three years.**

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and the age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right” (Early Years Foundation Stage statutory guidance 2012)

Delivering Excellence in Barnet's Early Years 2013 identifies our key principles and outcomes that will help us to deliver our vision. It outlines the national and local context within which early years operate, identifies some key challenges and opportunities, and sets out our future direction of travel. Other more detailed team plans and other action plans will necessarily sit underneath this strategy.

This document has been developed by Barnet Council, Early Years Strategy Group (EYSG), which is chaired by the Deputy Director of Children's Service Safeguarding, Prevention and Partnership. It will be used to inform commissioning of early years services and to develop the yearly updated team plans that sit under it. 'Delivering Excellence in Barnet's Early Years 2013' will be reviewed by the EYSG every three years and refreshed as appropriate.

Cllr Andrew Harper

**Cabinet Member for Education,
Children and Families**



Our vision

All young children in Barnet achieve the best possible outcomes, especially our most vulnerable children; supported by high quality, integrated and inclusive early years services that identify additional support needs early, are accessible, affordable and responsive to individual children and family's needs. This will enable every child to achieve their full potential, narrowing the gap for those whose attainment is at risk.

Our vision is underpinned by the three corporate priorities: better services, with less money, sharing opportunities and sharing responsibilities, and a successful London suburb. It is also consistent with our top line priorities for early years, which are an integral part of the partnership Children and Young People Plan.

Our vision for early years sits within Barnet's overall ambition and vision for the borough, known as One Barnet. This has the three key principles of a new relationship with citizens, a one public sector approach, and a relentless drive for efficiency.



National context

In recent years legislation around the early years of a child's life has been increased including through the Childcare Act 2006 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The duties on local authorities now include working with partners to ensure integrated early years provision, to ensure sufficient provision of children's centres, and to secure sufficient childcare.

Early years services are also underpinned by the Children Act 1989 and the Education and Inspection Act 1996.

The importance of early intervention and prevention, especially in the first five years of life, has been emphasised in a number of recent reviews (in 2010 and 2011) including the Graham Allen review on early intervention, Frank Field's review of poverty and life chances, the Government's social mobility strategy, Tickell's Early Years Foundation Stage Review and the NHS Social and Emotional Wellbeing: early years. Evidence-based interventions such as the Family Nurse Partnership programme for vulnerable first time young mothers are being expanded nationally and strong multi-agency working continues to be seen as crucial to maximising outcomes for children and families.

Barnet is working to ensure it is responsive to this evolving policy and legislative landscape, including the new Early Years Framework to be introduced in 2012 to streamline the curriculum for under fives and make childcare more flexible, and the proposed new approach to identifying and assessing SEN set out in the SEN and Disability Green Paper.



Barnet context: key challenges and opportunities

There are an estimated 21,241 children under five in Barnet (0-4 years)¹. There has been an increase of 24% against the population figures calculated as part of the 2001 Census. Children under five account for 24.4 per cent of Barnet's 19 and under population. The borough's population stands at 356,400 (recorded in 2011 Census) with 135,900 households in the borough. The borough's population is projected to increase further, a consequence of a continuing high birth rate and regeneration in the borough, which will generate increasing demand for early years services.

Early years services in Barnet are generally of good quality. The percentage of children achieving the expected standard across the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased steadily to 69% in 2010, while the gap between the lowest achieving children and other children has also narrowed. A total of 12,600 places with childcare providers for children under five are available across the borough². The Barnet Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2011 found that 71 per cent of parents were satisfied with their current childcare arrangements; more nursery provision and more after school clubs were cited as improvements that could be made for out of school services for children 0 – 14 years of age. This document reflects findings from the CSA.

Early years services are provided to those aged five and under, including those in school Reception classes. In Barnet services are delivered in maintained nursery schools, primary schools, children's centres, and in private, voluntary and independent providers (PVI) venues. As well as universal services such as education, health visitors, and information for parents, targeted services are made available to those with additional support needs.



1 ONS Subnational Population Projection (2008 Based, published May 2010)

2 Barnet Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, 2011

Vulnerable groups

Children living in poverty and deprivation are at greater risk of educational underachievement, ill health, involvement in crime and social exclusion. Statistics show that 24.1 per cent of children in Barnet under the age of 16 are estimated to be in poverty.

It is vital that children with a disability are identified early and appropriate support put in place. Nationally, around 5 per cent to 7 per cent of 0 – 15 year olds are estimated to have a disability¹. In Barnet, this would equate to around 3,600 – 5,100 children from 0 – 15.

Children with learning disabilities also require early identification and support. The percentage of Barnet children with SEN has remained fairly constant over time; 2 per cent of children in Barnet primary and secondary schools have a statement of SEN, with around 20 per cent requiring lower levels of additional support (either school action, and school action plus)².

Children in care are at greater risk of poorer outcomes. In Barnet around 0.4 per cent of all our children and young people are in care. Although those under five only make up a small proportion of children in care, they make up a larger proportion of those subject to a child protection plan. Children at risk of harm need to be identified early, so that appropriate support can be put in place for them and their families. Those who are in our care need strong early years support to help them achieve their potential.



¹ National Family Resources Survey carried out by the DWP estimates 5 per cent and DfE estimates around 7 per cent

² Barnet Profile of Children and Young People, November 2011

Principles and outcomes

Principles

- managing the supply and sufficiency of provision
- ensuring high quality provision
- maximising early intervention and prevention
- integrating services to reduce social and health inequalities
- working in partnership with families
- embedding inclusion and support for those with additional needs
- focusing support around key transition points.

Cross-cutting principles

- maximising funding
- effective partnership working
- developing the workforce
- meeting the needs of children and their families
- improving outcomes.



Managing the supply and sufficiency of provision

Local authorities have a key role in ensuring there is sufficient quality childcare provision that is matched to the needs of parents. Ensuring childcare is affordable is also important to enable parents to work or take part in other activities.

We aim to:

- ensure that provision across the borough is of high quality and across a range of providers to ensure parental choice
- develop more quality childcare places in specific identified areas within the borough
- ensure that all provision across the borough is able to include children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN).

We will:

- offer advice and support to all early years and childcare providers to enable them to deliver high quality sustainable provision
- offer advice and support to potential providers to ensure they meet all relevant requirements regarding regulations and standards
- offer advice and support to all early years and childcare providers to enable them to promote inclusive learning environments able to meet the needs of children with SEN
- encourage existing and new providers to develop provision to meet any unmet needs of local children and parents
- support families to access the free early learning offers.



Ensuring high quality provision

It is widely acknowledged that 'high quality pre-schooling is related to better intellectual and social/behavioural development for children'¹. In particular, high quality nursery education has been proven to reduce the number of children 'at risk' of SEN². It is also important in identifying and helping to raise outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children. Early years services need to be safe and provided in environments that support and extend children's development and learning.

We aim to:

- ensure providers adopt a culture of continuous self review and reflection to secure the best outcomes for all children
- ensure Integrated Early Years Centres have a clear core purpose focussed on improving outcomes for young children and their families, and reducing inequalities particularly around child development and school readiness, parenting aspirations, self esteem and skills, health and well being
- ensure high quality provision for disabled children and those with complex needs
- to ensure families have access to universal services which support the early identification of children requiring support
- ensure a safeguarding culture across early years settings.

We will:

- support childminders from when they express interest through to registration and delivery to ensure that quality is given the highest priority
- support and challenge Integrated Early Years Centres to plan services and target resources effectively, and monitor and evaluate their progress, including via payment for results
- provide training and development opportunities that support and challenge all early years practitioners to develop their skills and competencies to deliver the highest quality provision for all children
- ensure that all new providers have an induction that includes an audit of their inclusive practice
- provide access to universal services
- ensure the early years workforce is highly qualified, holding the minimum of a level 3 qualification by 2015
- facilitate the sharing of expertise between early years settings to improve quality.

1 The Effective Provision of Pre School Education Project (EPPE) 2004

2 The number of children 'at risk' of SEN dropped from 1/3 to 1/5 after receiving high quality nursery education ('Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability' SEN Green paper 2011)

Maximising early intervention and prevention

To identify children's support needs early to enable parents and professionals to put the right approach in place quickly.

We aim to:

- ensure that quality universal provision provides conditions that support learning and development and maximise outcomes for all children
- ensure that children's needs are identified early and addressed through individualised learning and seamless multi-agency support
- ensure that communication between council services and partners, especially the voluntary sector, is effective in identifying appropriate support and prevents duplication
- ensure access to appropriate funding for vulnerable children, including children in need
- ensure families are able to access services they really need to make a difference to their lives.

We will:

- develop early years practitioners' skills in identifying vulnerable children, at risk of underachievement and ensure that children have the highest quality learning experiences to narrow the gap, including through reading and physical programmes
- promote swift and systematic identification of children with additional needs, using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and follow up with appropriate intervention packages
- use the Early Years Vulnerable Children funding to support children and families in vulnerable situations to access support at the earliest opportunity
- ensure the two year old free entitlement is accessed by children and families who are eligible
- provide targeted evidenced based early interventions for families in greatest need
- provide family support and outreach work, including through universal and targeted parenting programmes.



Integrating services to reduce social and health inequalities

Children's Services, joined up with the NHS should support all individuals and their families to stay as independent as possible

Building on the Child Health Strategy (Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures) and the Social and emotional wellbeing: early years guidance, Integrated Early Years Centres in partnership with health, are now providing universal and targeted support services for 0 – 5 year olds.

We aim to:

- ensure that children have their developmental needs met in a timely and appropriate way
- develop links with specialist services for families where there are the most complex health or social care needs
- ensure a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to the development of a range of early years services, improving the aspirations, health and well being of children and their families
- promote family health and well being so that gaps are narrowed for children at risk of not achieving their potential
- ensure that multi-agency support helps to keep children and their families safe, free from poverty and able to improve their life chances.

We will:

- ensure timely developmental checks are carried out to identify and address any issues
- support settings that work with children under two to understand the importance of this period in a child's life for brain development and emotional well being
- promote good physical and mental health and economic well being among practitioners and families
- work in partnership with health visitors and midwives to implement a range of integrated child and family health services and programmes, including the Family Nurse Partnership.



Working in partnership with families

Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up

Statutory requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires providers to actively involve parents in their children's learning and development. The influence that early years provision has on a child's development is not just about what happens in the setting, but also how early years practitioners share their skills and knowledge with the families in their care. Research shows that committed partnerships with parents have greatest impact on outcomes for children especially those that are most vulnerable.

We aim to:

- develop the skills of providers to build warm and genuine relationships with parents and carers
- enable parents to take their child to an early years setting of their choice
- ensure parents presume and experience no barriers to their child's inclusion
- respect the views and wishes of parents and engage them in decision making, giving them a greater say in how services are delivered
- ensure that Integrated Early Years centres act as a hub for the local community.

We will:

- provide learning and development opportunities to develop the skills of the workforce in understanding and applying a family approach
- ensure Personal, Social and Emotional Aspects of Development work is delivered to all settings that take children under two
- actively engage parents in meetings and forums and support them to participate as members of the Children's Centres advisory boards
- encourage Integrated Early Years Centres to use their facilities creatively to deliver a range of services that meet the needs of the whole local community
- support parents to access personal budgets where appropriate.



Embedding inclusion and support for those with additional needs

Inclusion benefits everybody, and the right to inclusion is firmly enshrined in human rights and equality legislation. Inclusion is about valuing differences and encouraging all children to play together. This in turn leads to more cohesive and inclusive communities.

We aim to:

- ensure that children are valued and supported in early years settings to become confident and active learners
- ensure families are offered a Common Assessment (CAF) where the child may have unmet needs that universal services cannot meet
- ensure that children with SEN and disabilities in early years settings are given access to all learning opportunities
- ensure that children with SEN and disabilities are seen as a natural diversity to be celebrated
- ensure inclusion is embedded in each provider's day-to-day practice

We will:

- support the early identification of need which will lead to clear intervention packages focusing on and responding to the individual requirements of each child
- work with partners to ensure support is appropriate and offered in a timely way
- champion the use of the CAF to support children with multiple family needs and support practitioners in its application
- offer 'Early Support' to families with children with complex needs
- ensure early years providers feel confident, supported and resourced to create a 'can-do' inclusive culture to meet the needs of all children
- ensure settings audit and make changes to the environment, resources and teaching to ensure that children with SEN and disabilities are able to access all early years setting
- provide learning and development activities that enhance the knowledge and skills of the early years workforce regarding disabilities.

Focusing support around key transition points

‘During times of transition feelings of loss, fear and anxiety can accompany the positive feelings of excitement and anticipation. For young people especially, unless transition is understood and sensitively managed, transferring to a new nursery or other situation may be a very difficult experience’.

Children and families are supported around each transition with strategies to ensure continuity of experience and to help them understand change as part of a journey, for example from home to Integrated Early Years Centres to school.

We aim to:

- ensure that children, parents/carers and early years staff all take a key role in the transition experiences of early years children, sharing the responsibility for promoting a successful transition
- embrace children's individual needs and create successful transitions for all children.

We will:

- ensure all providers are trained in best practice to support transitions
- make support available to families experiencing a change in circumstances or facing challenging situations that impact on their ability to cope
- provide tools for children and families that enable them to better understand the impact of transition.



Action	Measure
Developing early years settings to enable specialist services, such as parenting classes, relevant to the needs of the whole community to be delivered, helping to prepare children for school.	Increase the proportion of parents completing targeted evidenced based parenting programmes.
Supporting parents to access the correct benefits and employment opportunities.	The proportion of children under 5 who live in families in receipt of out of work benefits.
Increasing the number of health visitors to ensure families have access to health visitors who support and promote breastfeeding and immunisations.	Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks from birth Resident children immunised by their 2nd birthday (MMR).
Identifying and supporting vulnerable families through early years development checks across education, health and social care.	Increase the number of Barnet children achieving the Early learning Goals in the Prime Areas of the EYFS (Communication and Language, Physical, and Personal Social and Emotional).
Continuing to facilitate and develop the childcare market, ensuring that there is sufficient quality childcare provision to meet the needs of working parents and support child development.	Participation of early years and play workers in CPD programmes and qualifications.
Supporting early literacy, family learning and school readiness through health visitors, libraries and early years settings.	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest.



For further information please contact:

tel: 020 8359 7677 or

visit www.barnet.gov.uk/wwcib/EarlyYearsPractitionersSupport