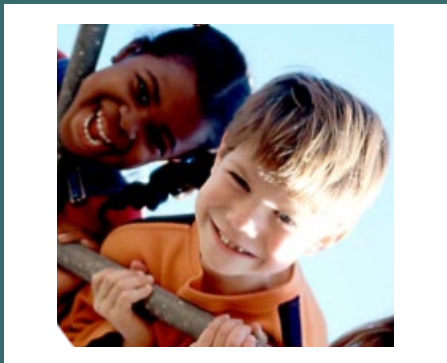
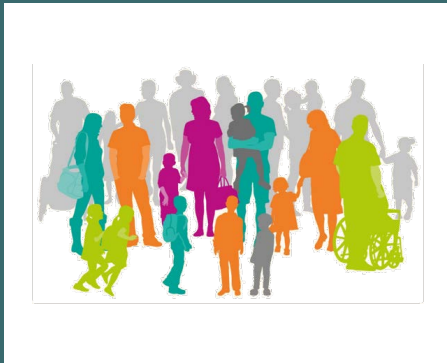




# Our strategy for Early Help 2022-2025



“Sustaining a Thriving System”

**Sarah Newman**  
Executive Director

Bi-Borough Children’s Services

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Director of Family Services

City of Westminster



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# Foreword

We are delighted to launch our next ambitious strategy for Early Help in Westminster. This strategy has again been co-created with our partners, and as such represents a commitment from organisations across our Early Help System to work collaboratively to achieve our vision: ensuring that we are able to provide the right support, at the right time, to improve the life chances of children, young people, and their families in Westminster. Preventative services aren't just the most effective way of achieving improved outcomes; they are a moral imperative.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges – for the children and families we support, as well as on an operational level - but I am proud of the flexible and collaborative response that our partnership has demonstrated, quickly finding effective new ways of working to ensure that support for our children and families has been as uninterrupted as possible.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we will build on the fantastic inroads we have made in the last three years. We are particularly pleased to be considered leaders in Family Hubs and in the field of Reducing Parental Conflict, all of which are underpinned by a well-developed and mature Early Help System.

In the next three years, we will continue to be ambitious and strive to develop the best service for children and their families, and this strategy sets out how we intend to do this over the next three years. There are many things that we are already doing well, and we know that there is still work to be done - for example on engaging with schools and young people. We will focus on identified areas for improvement in this strategy, using the momentum and energy that exists in our Early Help System to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.



**Tim Roca**  
**Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning**



# Introduction

“Our vision is every child, young person, and family is happy and healthy, and has the opportunity to achieve the very best outcomes in a resilient family and community.



In 2019, we set ourselves an ambitious strategy, and over the past 3 years we have achieved what we set out to. Then at very nascent stages, our Early Help system has now matured with partners – particularly the voluntary and community sector – reporting that they feel part of a structured and inclusive Early Help System. This strategy will continue to be ambitious in the delivery of our shared vision that **every child, young person, and family is happy and healthy, and has the opportunity to achieve the very best outcomes in a resilient family and community.**

It outlines a number of key commitments that are fundamental to the delivery of Early help through Family Hub services. We will do this by using our joint local resources as efficiently as possible to equip our combined workforce to deliver outstanding compassionate services.

We believe that Early Help means acting ‘**early to improve the lives of children, young people and families now and in the future.**’<sup>1</sup> Improved outcomes may be a result of preventing problems before they emerge or preventing the escalation and/or entrenchment of problems. Our Early Help services also promote the necessary conditions for every child’s healthy development, reflecting the critical nature of early childhood experiences in impacting brain development

and therefore a child’s ability to fulfil their potential into adulthood.

Early Help services are not statutory, but as highlighted by the Department for Education’s (DfE) *Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance*, we know that preventative services are “more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.”<sup>2</sup> We recognise that early help may be delivered both formally and informally. Indeed, **much of the support that families depend on is informal – provided through community relationships and universal services** – and we see it as our responsibility as a local authority to ensure that our services are structured in a way that builds community capacity and strengthens the provision of informal support.



<sup>1</sup> [What is early help? Concepts, policy directions and multi-agency perspectives](#) p.6.

<sup>2</sup> DfE, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, last updated 9 December 2020, p13.



Our strategy is underpinned by the ethos of strong

“ whole family and multi-agency working to support vulnerable families ”

and as such advances the national commitment to making a whole system approach to family support the established practice in local areas. **We view Early Help as a ‘system’ rather than one service.** It is a community of services that constitutes a way of working, and we will invest in and develop this system to achieve the best for our children and families in Westminster. **We have benefitted from Earned Autonomy status since 2018 as part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities’ ‘Supporting Families’ programme, and as such have been able to accelerate the development of our Early Help system.**

We will continue to provide an outstanding offer for children and young people, supporting residents into more jobs and training opportunities.

We will also renew our focus on designing and delivering services for the most vulnerable so they can be cared for within the community.

We will increase prosperity and reduce inequality by enhancing our residents’ access to good quality, well-paid employment opportunities and ensure Westminster is a healthy place to live, do business and succeed, from the start of life through to older age. It means creating a city of diversity that is inclusive and promotes mental wellbeing and healthy living.

We will ensure adults and children at every age can stay healthy by easily accessing everything our community has to offer through enhancing our partnership approach to education and healthcare with agencies, including voluntary sector organisations, libraries, sports and leisure, GP surgeries and other care professionals.

The strategy will look at our key achievements, our guiding principles, and shared behaviours. It will also explore our local picture which helped us to identify some of our early help indicators for our key priorities and provide a quick overview of our governance structure. The strategy walks through our early help framework and the early help system to provide a deeper understanding of how our priorities fit into the wider early help system.

“ We view Early Help as a **system** rather than one service. ”



# Key Achievements (2019-2022)

From April 2020 until March 2022 (including current cases) the **Intensive Support Team (IST)** has held 47 cases and of those, 3 children were in care at the end of the team's involvement. This represents a **93.6% success rate** of children remaining out of care.

**Trauma informed** training has been delivered to over 350 participants from a variety of partner organisations by a trauma specialist from the Early Help service.

Following a successful bid to the **Violence Reduction Unit**, Family Lives in partnership with Dream Arts launched an innovative Parent Navigator Programme- a community-based parent/carer champion model.

Over **80 practitioners** having been trained in foundation level **Non-violent resistance (NVR)** practice and 9 practitioners have become Advanced NVR practitioners.

In the **Early Help Strategy** Review undertaken in 2021, participants scored the questions 'Do you feel part of an early help system?' and 'How connected do you feel to others in the early help system' **4.45 and 4 out of 5.**

Our Targeted Early Help Family Practitioners have benefitted from access to our **systemic training** and has been strengthened by our Family Therapy offer and use of Family Therapy Clinics as an intervention with families.

Over the last four years, the Young Westminster Foundation has attracted funding and given out **77 grants** to their members totalling more than £1m.

Young Westminster Foundation led the formation of **5 Youth Hubs** across the borough and has been supported with a combined grant of **£1.5 million** from the Westminster Foundation.

Young Westminster Foundation's member organisations now include over **120 local non-profit organisations.**

To date, none of the children participating in the **School Inclusion pilot** have been permanently excluded, and **86%** have not received a Fixed Term Exclusion whilst on the programme.

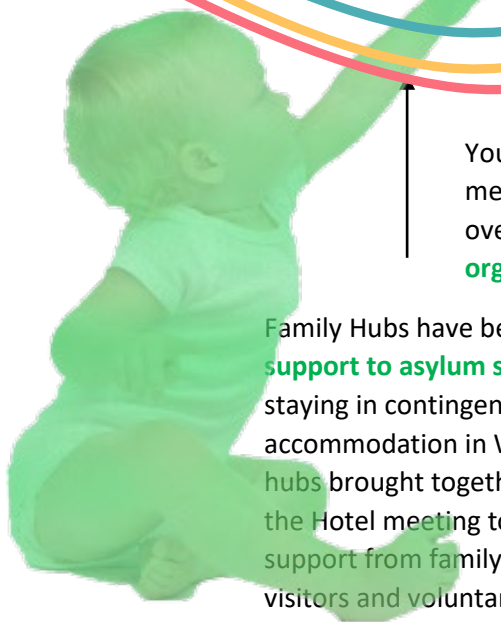
More than **5,600 laptops and computers** were distributed throughout the borough during lockdown to enable children to continue learning and reduce digital exclusion.

Family Hubs have been **providing support to asylum seeking families** staying in contingency hotel accommodation in Westminster. The hubs brought together a Team Around the Hotel meeting to co-ordinate support from family navigators, health visitors and voluntary sector groups.

**Youth Mental Health First Aid** training has been rolled out across the whole system, with **348 professionals** across Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea being trained.

We have commissioned an **Integrated Early Years Pathway (0-5 transformation)** involving 300 families and 40 frontline practitioners from across the system.

We have achieved our ambition of developing **3 Family Hubs.**





# Our guiding principles

Our overall approach has an emphasis on building resilience in families and capacity in communities. Whole family working and listening to the voice of the child is at the heart of our work. In working to achieve our outcomes and reviewing our principles through collaborative workshops, we now have a refreshed set of principles as follows:

 <p><b>Collaboration and co-production:</b> Everyone working within the children and families system is regarded as an early help practitioner. We work closely with universal services and communities to increase their capacity to offer support to families at the earliest point</p>	 <p><b>Strengthening communities:</b> Communities, families, young people, and children play a significant role in improving their own outcomes. We encourage opportunities that build their capacity and that are located within communities, such as mentoring and volunteering.</p>
 <p><b>Independence and resilience:</b> Families - with their children from pre-birth to 19 years – are encouraged to help themselves by developing new ways of delivering services. This includes web-based parenting support, self-assessment and signposting and must include provision for those children and families with SEND.</p>	 <p><b>Relational:</b> Our approach is relational, emphasising working with the whole family context and wider sources of existing support to create sustainable change, rather than reacting to individual problems. The role of the lead professional will be used to encourage and build the confidence of partner agencies to lead the co-ordination or team around work, to avoid escalation to social care referrals.</p>
 <p><b>Integration:</b> We have a partnership approach across the statutory and voluntary sector that is community based and ensures consistency in the application of levels of need and works within agreed response frameworks.</p>	 <p><b>Targeted:</b> Resources are targeted to those at risk of the poorest outcomes, working as a collaborative network of services to make every contact count and thus reducing referrals for social work intervention and entry to care or criminal justice systems.</p>
 <p><b>Evidence of impact:</b> Interventions are chosen based on acknowledged evidence of what works and for only as long as necessary</p>	 <p><b>Enterprising:</b> Open to new partnerships and funding opportunities to enable new innovative Early Help developments.</p>
 <p><b>Partnerships:</b> Using partnerships and relationships to build resilience, empowerment and capacity within local families, neighbourhoods, and communities.</p>	



## Our Shared Behaviours

This is the way in which we embody our principles, in how we behave with each other and the families that we are working with:



**Professional and compassionate curiosity** with each other as providers, and children, young people, and their families to understand the reason behind behaviours.



**Being able to connect quickly with individuals** by attuning voice and body language to the needs of the individual.



**Demonstrating kindness and compassion** in both our interactions with each other and with families and children, to create safe spaces for reflection and making changes.



**Everyone is a leader** and can respond promptly to family need without referring on



**Open and flexible** to adopting new approaches with families



**Involving families and young people** in what happens and understanding how they may experience our systems.



**Challenging** each other on these behaviours in a positive and supportive way



**Self-awareness** in ensuring as professionals we operate within the 'window of tolerance'<sup>1</sup> by using management support and self-help.





# Close Partnership Working

The Early Help Partnership Board is co-chaired by the Head of Early Help at Westminster City Council, and the Chief Executive of Young Westminster Foundation.

It is comprised of senior representatives from all our local partners, across the public and voluntary and community sectors. The Board has overseen the development of this strategy and will monitor its implementation.

The Early Help Partnership Board in Westminster is responsible for driving and developing the active, collaborative Early Help system that exists in the city. In its infancy the Board oversaw the development of the mission, vision, principles, and behaviours, which drive and bind together all partners. The Board ensures this vision is alive and implemented

## Our Shared mission, vision, principles, and behaviours

### i. Our shared mission

Early Help is a community of services – a system - supporting families to build resilience and transform their children’s lives.

### ii. Our shared vision

Every child and family is happy and healthy and has the opportunity to achieve in a cohesive (connected) community.





# Our Priorities for 2022-2025

This strategy sits within the **Bi-Borough Children & Young People's Plan**, and alongside the **Bi-Borough Inclusion Strategy (2021)**; the **Violence against Women and Girls Strategy (2021-26)**; and the **Antisocial Behaviour Strategy (2022-2027)**.

It is also aligned with Westminster's Strategy for **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (2021-24)**. The Early Help strategy adopts the 4 key objectives of the Bi-Borough Children and Young People's Plan, to ensure children are happy and healthy, they are safe and supported, to achieve and are resilient and prepared.

This strategy has been co-created with our partners, enabling a holistic understanding of the need throughout the borough, as well as what has been working well since the publication of the last strategy. In June 2021, 21 participants representing partner organisations from health, the Council, the voluntary and charitable sector, early years and children's centres, education providers, children's commissioners and DWP attended two focus groups reviewing the progress we have made in implementing our 2019-2022

Early Help Strategy. Using the review as a starting point, we hosted five further

workshops between November and January 2022 which were attended by 65 participants across 22 external partner organisations and Council colleagues from Westminster and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Through these workshops we have collaboratively shaped this strategy, agreeing our aims and priorities with partners across the Early Help system and collectively committing to its implementation.

Key themes which have emerged as priority areas are:





# Local Context and Need

Westminster City Council's children's services is part of a bi-borough arrangement with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) which came into operation in April 2018. Our sovereign strategy looks to meet local Westminster priorities, as shaped by the local profile and scale of need, to ensure that our offer is evidence-based, targeted, and has the greatest impact.

It should be noted that this strategy has been developed within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic which has exacerbated some pre-pandemic trends such as increasing concerns about mental health, financial instability, and socioeconomic disadvantage. In addition, the cost-of-living crisis that the UK has experienced since late 2021 is likely to have a disproportionate impact on families who need early help. To develop our strategic priorities, we have considered the following data which has been grouped under the 4 domains of child development. It should be noted that the collection of some data has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Financial instability and housing



An estimated **1500 vulnerable** households in Westminster into a category of deepened financial distress.

## Child and Maternal Health

Babies born below the birth weight (**2.0%**)

**National: 3.9%**



Mothers who are smoker at the time of delivery (**2.4%**)

**National: 9.6%**

## Ethnic and cultural diversity

Highest Levels of international migration nationally (**49%**)



The population vaccination coverage of MMR at age 2 (**78.1**)

**National: 90.3%**



The population vaccination coverage of DTAP/IPV/HIB at age 2 (**85.2%**)

**National: 93.8%**

## Serious Youth Violence

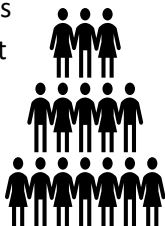
Under 25-year-olds account for **28%** of all people accused of violent crime in Westminster, however Westminster's crime statistics are heavily driven by the night-time economy.



Young people accused of violence (**21%**) are less likely to be recorded as residents of Westminster than for all accused of violence (**32%**). More generally, only **25%** of those accused across all crime are Westminster residents.

## Behavioural problems

The Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit worked with **173 individuals** between October 2020-September 2021



In 2019 juvenile first-time entrants to the criminal justice system rate fell to 131 per 100,000 but increased slightly again in **2020 to 160**.



First time entrants in Westminster are lower than all the other London boroughs, rates were **282 in 2018, 258 in 2019 and 216 in 2020**.

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Young people within the youth justice system receiving a conviction in court, who are sentenced to custody (rate per 1,000 of 10–17-year-olds) fell from 0.17 in 2019 to 0.05 in 2020 compared with the national rate of 0.13 and London rate of 0.19.



### Cognitive – Education and Inclusion

Between Spring 2018 and Spring 2021, the number of two-year-olds in free early education day care places dropped from **360 to 299**



In 2019 children were reaching the expected level of reading, writing and maths at the end of primary school (**72%**)  
**National: 64%**

The current number of children and young people Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) and 'not known' (**3.2%**)



Primary school attendance (**95.2%**)  
**National: 96.4%**



Secondary school attendance (**94.3%**)  
**National: 94.5%**

### Social and Emotional Wellbeing

**¼ of young people** felt that mental health issues were common amongst their peers.



An estimated **3,828 children** aged 5-17 have mental health disorders in Westminster.



Referrals to community-based Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are up by **57%** compared to two years ago. The main reasons for referral are relationship difficulties, anxiety, or a crisis.



Up to **20%** of women are affected by perinatal mental illness. Depression is the most prevalent mental illness in the perinatal period with approximately 10-14% of mothers affected.

### Poverty

Nine wards in Westminster contain one or more small areas that are among the deprived **20%** of small areas in England



Children living in low-income families (**28%**)  
**National: 30%**



High proportion of workless households (13%) of which households with children aged 0-19 make over a quarter.  
**National: 13%**



#### Areas for Development:

- Low birth weight
- Obesity in children
- Dental health
- Immunisation uptake
- Take up of free day care offer for 2-year-olds
- Mental health support for young people
- Serious Youth Violence





# Early Help Framework

*The framework that sits at the heart of our strategy is one of networked collaboration in which local partners work together effectively to create an Early Help System that is greater than the sum of its parts. This strong multi-agency collaboration will enable us to understand local trends and needs and deliver targeted, integrated support for families.*

- Our Family Hubs are primarily about the integration of services across a locality, with staff sharing a single practice approach.
- the physical buildings are the public-face of this integration and located in the areas of significant deprivation.
- We have enhanced our model with the development of **5 Youth Hubs**, which have become an integral part of our Family Hubs.
- National Centre for Family Hubs and Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) have been presenting this model of Family Hubs as an example of good practice in a range of regional and national forums.

- Three locality-based teams of Targeted Early Help Family Practitioners have continued to deliver a range of coordinated support for children and families embedding trauma-informed approaches.
- They have played a key role in the development and implementation of a new systemic early help assessment tool and have led “team around the family” approaches involving a range of partner agencies.
- The teams have had a particular focus on addressing poor school attendance, have embedded link workers in each school and are developing a new “team around the school” approach.

- We have agreed a common set of behaviours with our partners. They constitute those behaviours that we believe are most significant in getting both children and families into the ‘*Window of Tolerance*’, and those that will widen it over time.
- The Window of Tolerance is the space within which a person can process stimuli effectively and thus can think and make decisions rationally. When a person is experiencing extreme stress or trauma, they find themselves in the “hyperarousal” or “hyperarousal zones”, with fight or flight and immobilisation responses respectively. Through enacting these shared behaviours, we will create an environment which supports children and families to widen their personal Windows of Tolerance and build resilience through increasing their ability to manage intense emotions and situations.
- A relational approach is central to our strategy, recognising that strong positive relationships between children, their families and practitioners are essential for bringing about sustained change.
- All of our family-working is systemic and trauma-informed, reframing the thinking from “*What’s wrong with you?*” to “*What’s happened to you?*”. By focussing on the reasons for behaviour, we can achieve more effective interventions and long-term change.
- We recognise the diverse needs of children and families in Westminster and are committed to meeting these needs.

- We will share a single whole family approach when working with families, starting with a newly developed universal assessment.
- The whole family model uses the Team around the Family (TAF), as well as a Lead Professional who takes the lead on coordinating the multi-agency support being provided and acts as the point of contact for the child and family.

- The Thresholds of Need guidance indicates the level of intervention required to support families who have different levels of complexity. It sits within the framework outlined in the London Child Protection Procedures, as published by the London Safeguarding Children Partnership, and in accordance with the DfE’s Working together to Safeguard Children (2018) guide.
- Much of our Family Hub work straddles levels of need at Tiers 1-2), whilst Targeted Early Help work tackles Tiers 2-3. However, our Early Help system can respond across the entirety of the continuum ensuring that no one misses out.
- Our focus is on the change and improved outcomes we can bring about for families rather than meeting particular thresholds. A child and their family may require different levels of support throughout their lifecycle – the aim is always to provide enough support to allow the family to make change and sustain it.



# Priority 1: Supporting COVID-19 Recovery

## Details:

- Promoting emotional wellbeing, focussing on developing pro-social relationships, and building resilience for all ages through universal and targeted programmes for the whole family. This will include supporting young people seeking mental health support and supporting young people exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour.
- Ensure that transitions from home to nursery, from nursery to primary school, and from primary to secondary school are supported such that all children are resilient and able to manage change effectively.
- Identify SEND needs as early as possible, supporting families while they are waiting for assessments, seeking advice and support from specialist service where appropriate.
- Promote online safety, keeping children safe from abuse and cyberbullying.

## Outcomes:

Good early years  
development

Children safe from abuse  
and exploitation

## Measures:

- The percentage of children achieving good level of development
- Referrals to children's social care
- Attendance of parents of children with additional needs at awareness raising sessions
- Rates of *Children in Need* due to family in acute distress of family dysfunction.





## Priority 2: Youth Engagement

### Details:

- Engage young people on the cusp of or engaging in ant-social behaviour and/or substance misuse, preventing escalation into serious young violence and supporting pathways to more positive outcomes (e.g. Your Choice (ASB and drug strategy) taking into account specific needs of those children with SEND
- Continued focus on school attendance, building on the success of the school inclusion pilot and explore opportunities for partnership working with schools, including for example the development of a team around the school model.
- Developing formal and informal pathways for engaging young people not in education, training, or employment to facilitate a successful transition into adulthood, for example through the Bridging the Gap programme.

### Outcomes:

Good attendance

Engagement with  
education

Behaviour

Young people diverted  
from crime

### Measures:

- Primary and secondary school attendance
- Youth offending data
- Primary and secondary school suspensions
- Primary and secondary school permanent exclusions





## Priority 3: Health and Wellbeing

### Details:

- Ensure our children and young people are healthy, engaged in physical activity, with decreasing prevalence of childhood obesity and improving oral health and rates of immunisation.
- Focus on whole family mental health and wellbeing, supporting parents with their emotional resilience as well as children and young people, improving family relationships, with a particular focus on helping parents who are in conflict to work better together, and further developing our targeted response to domestic abuse.
- Ensuring the youngest (0-5) children in our communities get off to the best start through our integrated 0-5 pathway by promoting positive attachments, systematically identifying need from pre-birth, promoting speech, language and reading, and providing support at the earliest point.
- Ensure that all young people with SEND are supported through inclusive services and families are aware of the local offer and that parents of these children are able to take account of their own health wellbeing needs.

### Outcomes:

Good mental and  
physical health

Safe from  
domestic abuse

Good family  
relationships

Better managed  
substance misuse

### Measures:

- Take up of 2 years old offer
- Number of families accessing 'You Me and Baby Too' programme
- Quality of parent-child interaction
- Projected percentage of 0-17-year-olds in a household where an adult reports any substance misuse
- External referrals to CAMHS
- Number of practitioners accessing Reducing Parental Conflict training
- The percentage of outcomes successfully met at closure of family plan
- Public health population level data including immunisations, obesity, and oral health
- Number of reported incidents of Domestic Abuse







## Priority 4: Economic Wellbeing

### Details:

- Enabling families to access support on maximising their income through appropriate channels, this may be delivered by local partners.
- Ensuring families have the information that they need to inform themselves of benefits available to them to support with the increase in cost of living
- Supporting families and young people to access sustainable employment opportunities, including those with SEND

### Outcomes:

Financial Stability

Secure housing

### Measures:

- Parental worklessness
- Family homelessness
- Families experience economic hardship.





# Our Early Help System

## Our Priorities

As previously referenced, we have developed our priority areas to focus on for the duration of this strategy from the review of data which highlights areas of concern, alongside with dialogue through workshops with our partners. These priorities will support the achievement of our proposed outcomes and will be delivered through accompanying action plans, which in turn will shape the localised operational action plans for each of the Family Hubs. .

All of our priorities are underpinned by a principle of inclusivity and a commitment to delivering services that are accessible and inclusive for all children, including those with SEND.

Partners felt that supporting families to overcome the adverse impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic should be a key focus over the next 12 months. This incorporates and links to wider trends around increasing mental health issues and a decline in emotional, physical and economic wellbeing. With more children online than ever before, partners also raised online safety as a new area of focus, whilst highlighting that the decreased opportunities for children aged 0-5 to socialise may have inhibited the early identification of SEND.

It was also highlighted that some families are increasingly anxious as a result of the pandemic. Parents need to feel empowered to do things for themselves, taking back responsibility and regaining their confidence.

Youth engagement, particularly in relation to young people not in education, employment or training, and those at risk of becoming

perpetrators or victims of anti-social behaviour and/or serious youth violence also emerged as a priority area. It was felt that there needed to be more defined pathways for engaging with schools, in addition to informal pathways to engage those young people who are not currently accessing Early Help services.

We have also used the Young Westminster Foundation's needs analysis ('Our City, Our Future')<sup>3</sup> which was conducted with young people in Westminster to inform the strategy, to ensure that the views of our young people are heard and reflected. The strategy should be read alongside the accompanying action plan which delineates the activities we will undertake to achieve our outcomes.

## Our shared ambition for Early Help in Westminster

Our ambition is to continue to build on the strong foundations established over the past three years, using collaboration and our integrated approach to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and their families so they are thriving and resilient. We want to continue to strengthen our Early Help System ensuring that our joint resources are used as effectively as possible. Investing in the development of our collective workforce will enable them to deliver outstanding services that address the existing and emerging challenges faced by children and young people in Westminster in a relational and compassionate manner. We want to ensure that as many children as possible are fully engaged in education by helping schools embed a whole-family trauma-informed

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<sup>3</sup> [YWF Our-City-Our-Future 2020 21.pdf \(youngwestminster.com\)](#)



approach, as well as by enhancing local community partnerships.

Our Early Help System is ‘mature’, but we want to develop it by further embedding our shared behaviours and shared practice model to ensure our whole-family, multi-agency approach is consistent throughout the continuum of support we offer. Over the course of this strategy, we will also improve our data maturity to ensure that we are accurately measuring our performance against the outcomes that we are collaboratively working towards.

### **Our Outcomes:**

The outcomes listed below will be included in our action plans alongside measurable indicators. In developing and meeting our shared priorities we will be working towards these outcomes. The outcomes listed have been proposed by the national Supporting Families programme and we will be working towards them and adapting them in a way that meets local needs

- Good attendance, behaviour, and engagement with education
- Good early years development
- Good mental and physical health
- Better managed substance misuse
- Good family relationships
- Children safe from abuse and exploitation
- Families diverted from crime
- Safe from domestic abuse
- Secure housing
- Financial stability

These outcomes have been agreed by the Early Help Partnership Board, with data used to measure these outcomes to be provided by Public Health, population data and local partners across the Early Help System.

### **Where are we and where do we need to be?**

In consultation with partners through the Early Help Partnership Board, an annual assessment has been carried out of the level of “maturity” of service transformation regarding Early Help and early intervention. The process previously considered seven transformation strands, and used local evidence, to assess the level of maturity across a four-point scale.<sup>4</sup> Moving forward, a new tool known as the Early Help System Guide (EHSg) will be used to evaluate the maturity of our Early Help system.

The EHSg was launched in 2020 by the recently formed Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), with a revised version of this guide due in 2022. The aim of the EHSg is to provide a national vision for Early Help, developing a common language for the changes we want to see, with a self-assessment that will guide conversations between partners to shape strategic priorities on a local level.<sup>5</sup>

The Early Help Partnership Board has identified the ongoing development of the local early help system using the EHSg as a self-audit tool and will identify key priorities following a review of Westminster’s progress under the revised model from the start of 2022. Ahead of this, priority areas for further action have been identified from workshops for the 2020 assessment, as well as the Early Help Strategy

<sup>4</sup> This process was a requirement of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of the national Supporting Families programme.

<sup>5</sup> Guidance: Supporting Families: Early Help System guide; DLUHC and DfE April 2022



- Action**
- To further develop governance and performance frameworks to enable organisations to take collective responsibility, share risks and jointly invest in early help (including potential for partnerships-wide joint commissioning).
- Impact**
- More efficient and responsive system which can match demand with local resource.
  - Early Help system is well co-ordinated and underpinned by strong relationships.
- Measures**
- Early Help Review 2023 (examples of this in practice)
  - Early Help Review 2023.

Leaders

Communities

- Action**
- To continue to build community capacity to help reduce demand on higher tier services.
  - Developing inclusive communities which are responsive to international crises whilst taking account of local impact.
- Impact**
- Local communities are more connected and look out for each other.
  - Community resources are developed.
- Measures**
- Early Help 2023 – qualitative measure
  - Response to international crises e.g., number of schools place found, number of host families matched.

- Action**
- Embed a new universal assessment tool, preventing families having to constantly retell their stories
  - Explore digital opportunities building on Family Hub to capture and share family plans and outcomes with families and partners alike
- Impact**
- Families feel listened to and empowered
  - Partner working across the system is more co-ordinated
- Measures**
- Families feedback (qualitative measure)
  - Reduction in number of registrations for the same family
  - Number of families signing up to Family Hub/accessing plans
  - Improved data reporting

Families

**Early Help System Actions 2022-2025**

Data

- Action**
- To improve data maturity, widening the range of data feeds from different services and partners to inform Frontline and strategic decisions, continuing to build on initial plan for a Data Lake.
- Impact**
- Improved evidencing of collective impact of service provision and interventions.
  - Data sharing improves intelligence, allowing
- Measures**
- System in place to collate data on shared outcomes across the partnership.
  - Partners signed up to and using Family Hub.

Workforce

- Action**
- To better define and embed our shared practice model through a workforce development programme
  - Ensure that SEND skills and knowledge are embedded throughout out Early Help workforce
  - To support education services to participate in while family working with all relevant agencies, supporting a Team Around the School approach
- Impact**
- Shared practice model enables families to receive consistent and holistic support
  - Early Help partners supported to identify SEND need early/to alleviate pressure on specialist services.
- Measures**
- 'Partners feel they share one practice model'
  - Partners accessing SEND training



## Next Steps

- As an Early Help System, we will seek opportunities to develop our model so that we can achieve the very best outcomes for families and their children and share learning with other areas:
- Barnardo's have been commissioned to undertake an evaluation of our Family Hub Integrated Leadership Teams. As this is a key part of our integrated Early Help system it is vital to build evidence on its effectiveness and to consider how to develop going forward. This report should be available in June 2022. We are also exploring other ways to measure the impact of the integration that we have achieved, and this will be a focus during the course of this strategy.
- We are participating in a National Evaluation of Family Hubs being undertaken by Warwick Business School and, as a part of this, will receive an insights report.
- Locally, each of our Family Hubs will be developing an Annual Plan, which will consider local population data as well as combined local intelligence. The plans will consider how each area will work towards the priorities agreed in this strategy.
- Regular audits will be undertaken of the effectiveness of our practice framework.
- We will regularly measure the maturity of our Early help system against the new DLUHC measures.
- The Young Westminster Foundation (YWF) will continue to gain the views of young people which will inform our work.
- The YWF will continue to work with the Centre for Youth Impact to increase capacity within the youth hubs around monitoring and evaluation working towards a common outcomes framework.
- Monitoring priorities and outcomes.

**We will monitor our progress in achieving our priorities and evaluate the degree to which our Strategy and its refresh reflects/drives our progress to meet national expectations. This will be ongoing through our governance structure via the Early Help Partnership Board, and we will undertake a detailed review after 18 months (September 2023).**



## Our Partners

- **The Council** – with representatives from Children’s (targeted Early Help, Children’s Commissioning, Education – SEND and Schools Standards, Early Years), Housing, Community Protection, Libraries and Public Health
- **Health** – with representation from CLCH, CCG and a local authority CAMHS Commissioner.
- **Youth provision** – Young Westminster Foundation acting as the strategic lead of young people’s services
- **Voluntary and Community Sector** – the children’s lead from the VCS local umbrella organisation. Plus:
  - **West London Zone**
  - **Westminster Mind**
- **Police** – a representative from the Police Youth Engagement Team
- **The three Family Hub Leads** (this includes a school representative)
- **Westminster Adult Education**
- **DWP Representative**





## Appendix

**Figure 1. Key Achievements (2019-2022)**

<b>Key Achievements (2019-2022)</b>	
<p><b>There is much to celebrate since the publication of our last strategy. Key highlights include the following:</b></p>	
<b>Family Hubs</b>	<p>Westminster has achieved its ambition of developing three Family Hubs. Our model is locality based with a physical building in each of our three localities. The emphasis is on the integration of teams across each locality area, with staff working to a single approach. This integration is sustained by shared workforce training and an integrated leadership team (ILT) overseeing the work of each hub. The physical hub is the public face of the integration. As of March 2022, two of our Family Hubs – Bessborough and Church Street – have completed capital works to their physical hub and capital works are now underway to develop the Queens Park Family Hub which is set to open in September 2023. Westminster is seen as pioneering the Family Hub model and shares this practice across the London region and wider.</p>
<b>Integrated Early Years Pathway (0-5 transformation)</b>	<p>Westminster have commissioned an integrated pre-birth to five model. As part of this, the health visiting service will form part of the wider early help partnership to ensure all practitioners are best equipped to deliver on the national and local commitments for the Best Start in life. The newly formed pre-birth to five pathways will include integrated universal delivery to improve the health and wellbeing of all children, young people, and parents. The new service will build and implement an intensive support offer for parents with wider vulnerabilities. This will provide a core high quality universal offer whilst also providing a more intensive offer in proportion to need. The transformation work brings together the <i>Best Start in Life</i>, <i>Healthy Child Programme</i>, and <i>School Readiness</i> and is the product of an extensive co-design process involving 300 families and 40 frontline practitioners from across the system. From April 2022, each Family Hub will have an integrated staffing structure consisting of staff from both the health visiting and early help service, led by a jointly employed 0-5 pathway lead (see appendix 1).</p>
<b>Youth Hubs</b>	<p>In 2019, with the re-introduction of funding from Westminster City Council into youth services, Young Westminster Foundation led the formation of 5 Youth Hubs across the borough: Avenues Youth Project, Fourth Feathers Youth and Community Centre and Future Men operating both Amberley Youth Club, St Andrews and Churchill Gardens Youth Club. These have become an integral part of their local Family Hub with the youth manager / leader becoming an active member of the Family Hub Integrated Leadership Team (ILT). This has significantly increased local collaboration and joined up working including working with other grassroots community organisations in each locality. The development has been supported with a combined grant of £1.5 million from the Westminster Foundation.</p>



	This has enabled a change, for individual youth clubs, from a focus on their sustainability to one of development and growth with greater opportunities to collaborate and enhance the quality-of-service provision.
<b>Funding</b>	Over the last four years, the Young Westminster Foundation has attracted funding and given out 77 grants to their members totalling more than £1m which has improved financial sustainability within the sector. This funding includes investment from corporate partners, trusts, foundations, the local authority, Metropolitan Police, Greater London Authority, the local Clinical Commissioning Group and other statutory partners.
<b>Early Help system</b>	In the Early Help Strategy Review undertaken in 2021, participants scored the questions 'Do you feel part of an early help system?' and 'How connected do you feel to others in the early help system' 4.45 and 4 out of 5 respectively. These scores reflect that the framework for Early Help work is well established in Westminster, with feedback also highlighting that there was a feeling of shared ownership between different sectors. The voluntary and community sector noted that they valued the relational approach and felt appreciated.
<b>Systemic Practice</b>	Our Targeted Early Help Family Practitioners, have benefitted from access to our systemic training, delivered through the Centre for System Social Work. This provides a synergy with the council's social work services and has been strengthened by our Family Therapy offer and use of Family Therapy Clinics as an intervention with families.
<b>Youth Violence</b>	<p>Following a successful bid to the Violence Reduction Unit, Family Lives in partnership with Dream Arts launched an innovative Parent Navigator Programme, a community-based parent/carer champion model. Parent volunteers who speak a wide range of community languages are trained to support and share information with other parents about serious youth violence. We are also looking at Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) more widely as a local authority, as reflected in the ASB strategy.</p> <p>Since 2019, the Church St Transitions Pilot, led by Future Men has supported vulnerable children with the transition from primary to secondary school. The pilot programme developed out of the Westminster Serious Youth Violence Task Group piloting a Public Health Approach to tackle youth violence.</p>
<b>Parental Conflict</b>	Westminster is the lead for a group of seven local authorities (LAs) in a programme entitled 'Building Relationships for Stronger Families' as part of the Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) Reducing Parental Conflict programme. As the Lead LA, Westminster coordinates all referrals for the programme. The programme has been running since April 2019, and Westminster has since referred 183 parents to the four interventions on offer.
<b>Non-violent resistance (NVR)</b>	An intervention offering parents and carers a series of alternative systemic for managing young people's destructive, controlling, or violent relationships – is becoming well established in Westminster, with over 80 practitioners having trained in Foundation level NVR practice and 9 practitioners becoming Advanced NVR practitioners.
<b>School inclusion</b>	The School Inclusion pilot is now an integral part of the wider Early Help Service. It takes a whole family and trauma informed approach to tackle the underlying issues that lead to exclusion and has continued to expand in local schools. To date, none of the children participating in the pilot have been





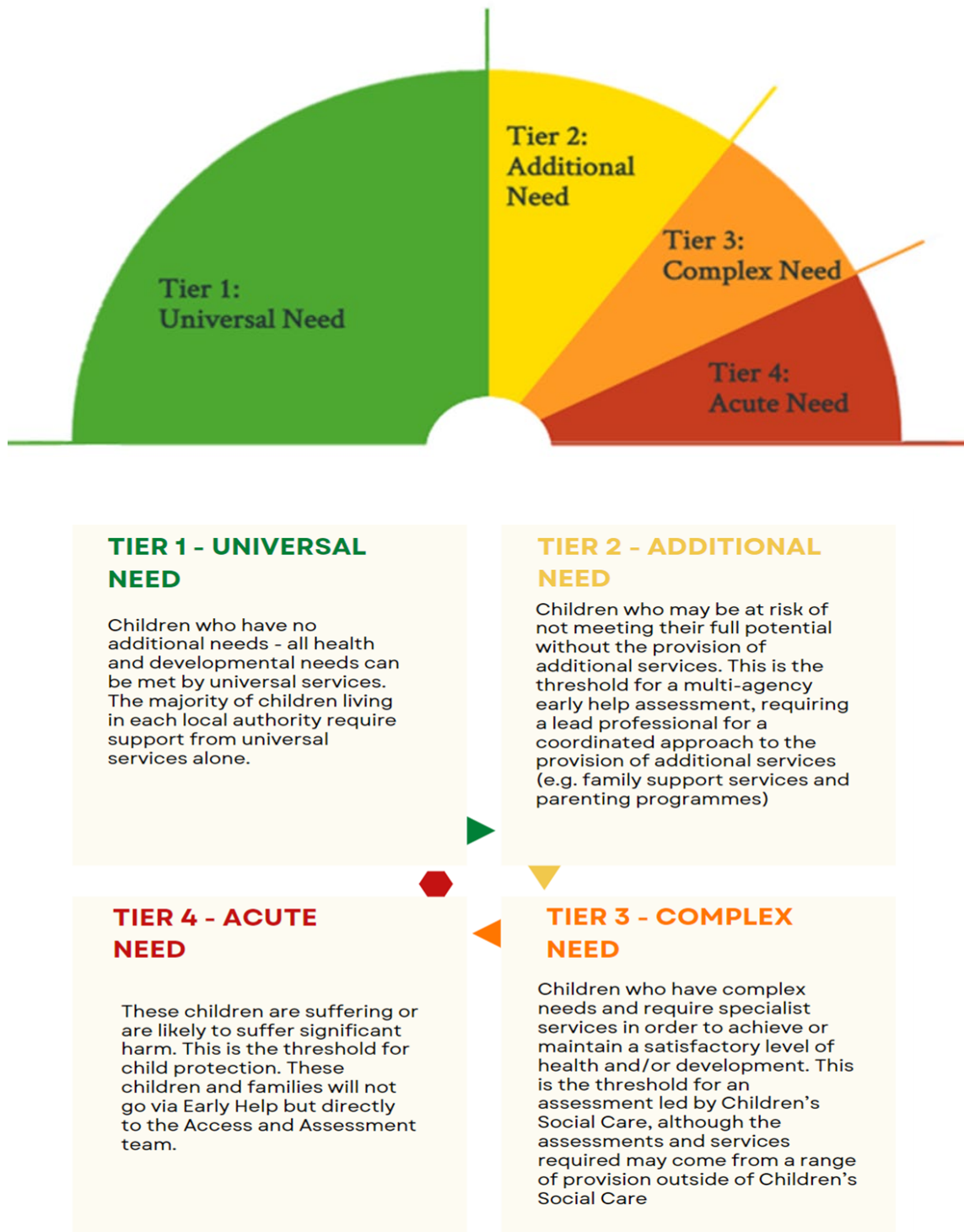
	permanently excluded, and 86% have not received a Fixed Term Exclusion whilst on the programme.
<b>Trauma Informed Practice</b>	Trauma informed training has been delivered to over 350 participants from a variety of partner organisations by a trauma specialist from the Early Help service, along with an external trainer. We have 9 trauma champions from several key organisations who will now co-deliver training to other partners. Westminster has also developed a 'Think Trauma' awards scheme for schools, to support them to embed the learning from the Trauma Informed training. To date, 5 schools have received awards through this scheme.
<b>Intensive Support Team (IST)</b>	Our Intensive Support Team was established to prevent children and young people identified as being 'at risk' of entry to the care system needing to leave their families and become 'looked after children'. From April 2020 until March 2022 (including current cases) the IST has held 47 cases and of those, 3 children were in care at the end of the team's involvement. This represents a 93.6% success rate of children remaining out of care. The focus moving forward will shift from 'edge of care' to preventing family disruption, emphasising relationships at home. The IST is innovative in employing therapeutic interventions, using Compassion Focussed Therapy as well as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). The introduction of CBT is part of a London-wide 'Your Choice' programme which helps vulnerable children and young people at risk or affected by violence to thrive, by equipping them with tools and techniques to overcome a range of psychological challenges.
<b>Mental Health</b>	Youth Mental Health First Aid training has been rolled out across the whole system, with 348 professionals across Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea being trained so they are better able to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs (EWMH) of the children and young people they support. Two 'Kids Time' workshops have been developed and embedded in the borough which enable children and young people to explore their experience of having a parent with mental ill health through an arts-based approach. Funding was also secured for a one-year pilot of a Mind mental health worker in Youth Hubs to provide direct EWMH support to 200 young people per year who access our Youth Hubs.
<b>Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)</b>	<p>We have improved engagement with smaller community groups to deepen our understanding of the needs of local communities, for example by developing work with Regents Park Mosque and working with the Mosaic Trust and the Police to understand community concerns about youth violence. Our VCS providers such as St Vincent's Family Project are increasing their capacity and skills to meet early speech and language needs in the community while West London Zone is working in schools, assigning each child they work with a Link Worker who creates a personalised programme of support for them.</p> <p>Young Westminster Foundation's member organisations now include over 120 local non-profit organisations delivering services for children and young people in the borough covering areas such as play, sports, employability, music, family services and social justice.</p>
<b>Digital Inclusion</b>	With funding and donations from the Council, Young Westminster Foundation and the Department for Education, along with other charitable streams, more than 5,600 laptops and computers were distributed throughout the borough during lockdown to enable children to continue learning and reduce digital



	<p>exclusion. The 'Digital Futures' project led by YWF in partnership with WCC supplemented the national DFE scheme.</p>
<p><b>Refugee/Evacuee Response</b></p>	<p>Family Hubs have been providing support to asylum seeking families staying in contingency hotel accommodation in Westminster. The hubs brought together a Team Around the Hotel meeting to co-ordinate support from family navigators, health visitors and voluntary sector groups. Trauma informed training has consequently been offered to volunteers and hotel staff supporting people who have had very difficult experiences. The hubs have been instrumental in linking families to local services and schools, as well as in making onward referrals when families are moved. Group play activities have been provided during the school holidays, and by working with the Young Westminster Foundation our family hubs will be linking youth work and mentoring with some of the young people.</p>

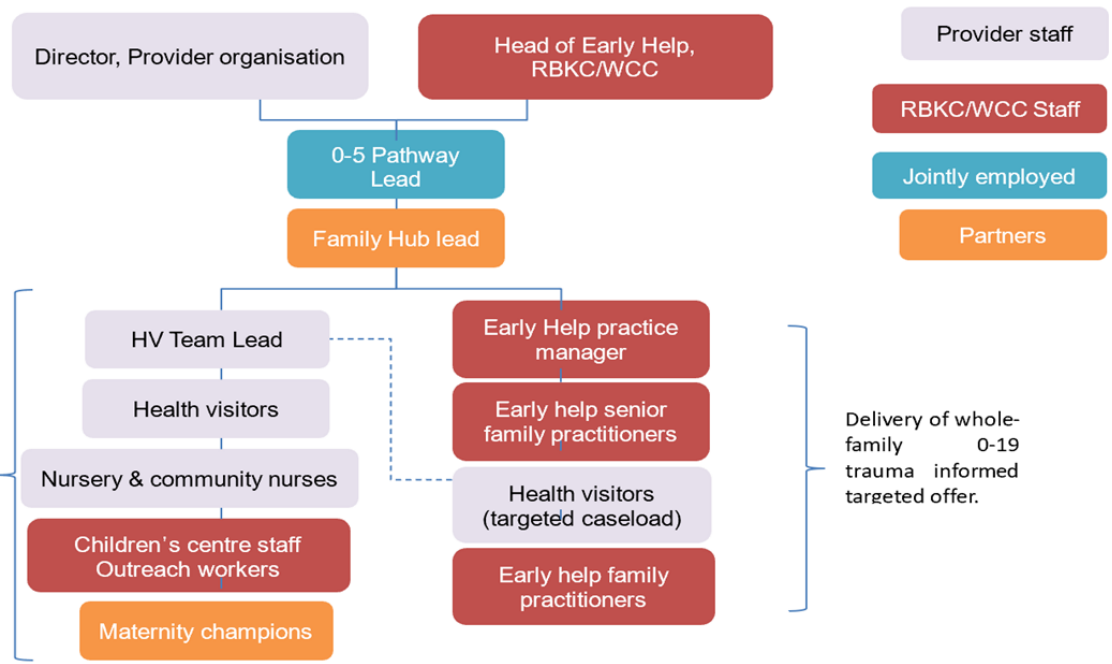
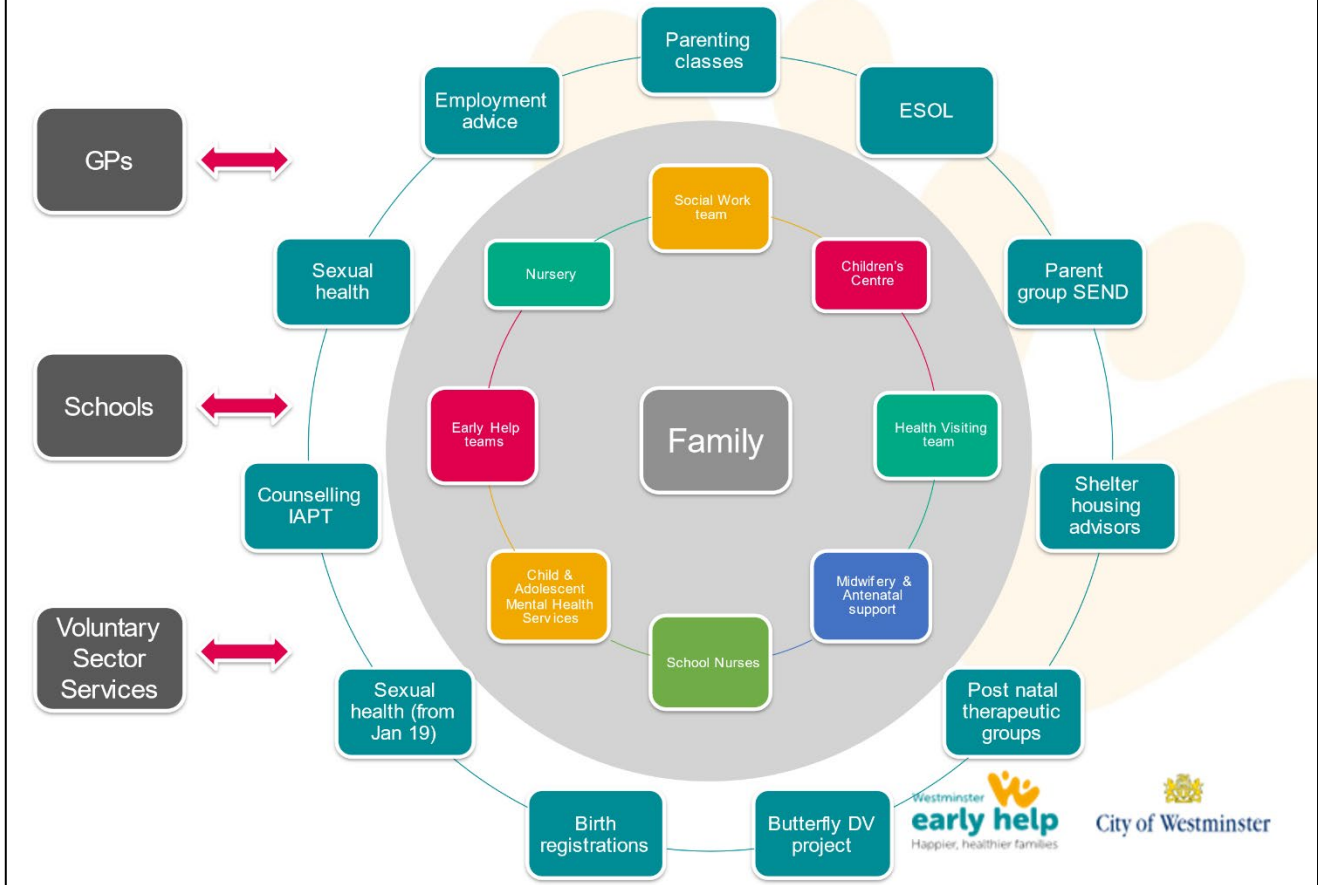


Figure 2 Threshold of Need.





## Core services based at the HUB



Delivery of the family hubs, which includes delivery of the Children's Centres as well as the Universal and Universal Plus Healthy Child Programme.

Delivery of whole-family 0-19 trauma informed targeted offer.