

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY HELP TO PROMOTE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES

WITNESS SUBMISSION

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SUMMARY OF EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION IN HILLINGDON / ROLE OF YOUR SERVICE OR ORGANISATION

Organisation

The Child and Family Development Service is one of four service delivery strands that form the Early Intervention and Prevention Service. Our core business is that of securing and providing a range of early learning, childcare and family development services delivered through early years centres and the children's centre programme.

The core purpose of children's centres as set out by the DfE in the Statutory Guidance for Children's Centres (April 2013), is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- Child development and school readiness;
- Parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
- Child and family health and life chances.

The children's centre programme in Hillingdon comprises 18 centres, organised in three localities to support and enable the delivery of effective, joined up services to residents through collaborative working. 6 centres are directly managed by LBH - 3 of which are integrated centres incorporating outstanding early education provision alongside the community services. A further 12 centres are commissioned and run by schools, a college and a charity.

Funding

Each centre receives a budget for staff and a budget for premises costs based on a calculation of £70 per m². Each locality in turn receives a budget for the delivery of services to be procured at a local level to meet the needs of residents within the area. The amount given to each locality is calculated using the following four factors in relation to children living within the wards served by the locality:

- The total population of children under 5 years.
- The percentage of children living in poverty.
- The percentage of children underachieving at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The percentage of children classed as obese aged 5.

Decisions regarding how the locality budgets are spent are made by the Locality Group Boards.

Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee - 25 November 2015

The local authority retains a central budget used for the commissioning and procurement of programme-wide services.

Partners

Key partnerships have and continue to be forged both within and external to the organisation. Centres work with a range of key partners to facilitate and co-deliver services for families in the community. The following list of partners is not to be seen as exhaustive;

- Children's Social Care
- Employment Support and Benefit Advice provided by P3
- Healthy Child Programme provided in partnership with Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust.
- Hillingdon Adult Learning
- Key Working service
- Maternity Services provided by The Hillingdon Hospital and Watford General Hospital
- Mental Health and Well-Being Support provided by Hillingdon Mind and CAMHS

Service Delivery and Outcomes

The Child and Family Development Service plays an integral part in the delivery of targets set out in the EIPS service plan. Children's Centre service delivery aligns to the 4 EIPS workstreams and localities report quarterly on the nature and volume of activity undertaken and the impact, causal or direct, for children and families.

Children's centres are directly responsible for delivering outcomes in relation to the targets specified below.

Target in EIPS Service Plan	Outcomes
1.13 Families are able to achieve early years foundation stage learning goals for their children through participation in educational programmes in early years settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at children's centre activities supports parent's knowledge/understanding of their child's learning and development. • Parents are supported to access nursery places for their children through the 2 year old and 3&4 year old funding entitlement. • As a consequence the number of Hillingdon children achieving a good level of development at the end of the EYFS rose 6.9% in 2015, from 58.3% to 65.2%.
1.14 Families including those entitled to the 2 year old free childcare offer access childcare provision	Uptake of children accessing their 2 year old funded childcare increased slightly from 46.7% in the spring term 2015 to 48.4% in the summer term 2015.

2.5 Families, particularly those identified as at risk of poor outcomes, are able to ensure their children are school ready because they have benefited from the Children's Centre programme	At the mid-year review Children's centres had provided 6915 activity sessions aligned to the EIPS Strong families workstream, of which there had been 38036 beneficiaries; 61% of whom were deemed to be from a vulnerable family.
2.7 Families, particularly those at risk of poor outcomes, choose to lead healthy lives with the support of the Children's Centre programme	At the mid-year review Children's centres had provided 3682 activity sessions aligned to the EIPS Healthy families workstream, of which there had been 26049 beneficiaries; 47% of whom were deemed to be from a vulnerable family.
2.8 Parents, particularly those at risk of poor outcomes, are able to give their children the best start in life because they are enabled to sustain participation in education, training and employment with the support of the Children's Centre programme	At the mid-year review Children's centres had provided 2394 activity sessions aligned to the EIPS Prosperous families workstream, of which there had been 5117 beneficiaries; 75% of whom were deemed to be from a vulnerable family.

Case Study

Below is a case study which gives an example of a piece of targeted work for a family provided by a children's centre.

Approach

The G family moved into the area - Mum, Dad, two boys (8 & 10) and a girl (2). Mum accessed Oak Farm CC, as she was feeling isolated and looking for activities to do with her daughter. Subsequently, it transpired that the family were on a CiN plan; both parents had learning difficulties and their two sons had been diagnosed with severe autism.

The Family Support Worker (FSW) facilitated an Action Plan with the family to achieve the following:

- Healthy Eating – learning nutritional cooking skills. Eating on a budget and introducing healthy life long habits.
- Confidence – empowering to do things for herself: open mail, make telephone calls, getting out, accessing play sessions at the children's centre and socialising.
- Positive Parenting – Parenting classes and advice.
- Improve mental health and wellbeing – emotional support, listening visits, facilitate increased organisational skills.

In Practice

Initially contact was made at the drop in sessions; Mum sought advice for her daughter's weight gain. Further support was provided on a fortnightly basis, through listening visits and home visits to the family, to understand their concerns and support them to make positive changes. Each visit brought different concerns as the family found it difficult to manage day to day family pressures, e.g. cooking on a budget, planning healthy meals, budgeting, managing challenging behaviour.

CiN meetings were attended and progress/contact reports were written and shared with the family and the multidisciplinary team working with them.

As the family were on a low income and they found it difficult to purchase items for the home, an application was made to Uxbridge Welfare Trust, a charitable organisation whose purpose is to relieve the poverty in the Uxbridge area. Funds were granted for a sofa, dining room chairs and cooking equipment.

Outcomes

Mum made progress on understanding the concept and need for healthy and nutritious food. She attempted to cook some meals from scratch and began to role model healthy eating habits and life skills for the family. The advice given by the children centre has empowered the parents to make positive changes. There was also significant progress in Mum's parenting skills and use of strategies learnt, to manage the children's behaviour at home, and supporting better communication with her children.

Next Steps

- The G family to continue accessing Children's Centre services.
- Mum to continue to socialise with other mums and gain even more confidence. This will enable her to progress and continue good relationships with other parents' and professionals.
- Accessing the centre will facilitate and enhance possible contact with other services and enable Mum to seek further advice as required.
- The listening visits and support will reduce in relation to need continually decreasing over time from the Children's centre.
- The family may benefit from specialist parenting classes: learning strategies to cope with challenging behaviour as the children get older.

Further thoughts

4 Children carry out a national census of children's centres annually. The 2015 census highlights the following points:

- Over 1 million children and families are regularly using Children's Centres, with a majority of Centre managers saying that numbers have gone up in the past 12 months.
- Parents tell us that Children's Centres make an important difference to their lives – 79.4% of parents say that being unable to use their local Children's Centre would make

life harder for them and their families, and 34.4% said it would make a “big difference” and that life would become “a lot more difficult”.

- Parent and health services represent a fundamental aspect of Children’s Centres’ service offer, highlighting the crucial role they have in supporting the health and development of young children and their place in delivering early intervention.
- Children’s Centres are playing an important part in the provision of childcare, particularly for 0-2 and 3-4year olds.
- Children’s Centres have developed strong relationships with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory organisations in their local areas and have embedded themselves in communities.

Given the nature of their service offer and the extent of their reach, children’s centres in Hillingdon are well placed to support the early intervention agenda and support families to make sustained changes to benefit children and parents at the earliest opportunity.