



Hounslow Early Help Partnership Commitment 2019-2021

This Partnership Commitment may be read in conjunction with:

Hounslow Early Help Offer

Hounslow Early Help Practice Framework (in development)

Hounslow Early Help Hub – Guidance for Practitioners

Community Action Partnership Panel – Terms of Reference

Hounslow Early Help Quality Assurance Framework (in development)

Hounslow Early Help Performance & Impact Framework (in development)

Hounslow Safeguarding Children's Board Thresholds Guidance and Assessment Protocol

Our Partnership Vision

Early help in Hounslow supports positive outcomes and experiences for children, young people and their families.

All agencies deliver collaborative, co-produced and co-ordinated early help services that build on strengths, develop skills, nurture resilience and hear the voice of children, young people and their families, especially when they are experiencing difficulties at home or in the wider community. The Partnership Commitment reinforces our collective responsibility to keep children and young people safe, healthy, engaged in learning and to support those who care for them to be emotionally, socially and economically resilient.

Characteristics of our vision in practice include:

- Access to good quality universal services as the foundation for families
- Services able to respond as soon as possible when difficulties emerge
- Help available to families in the early years of a child's life to ensure young people have the best start in life
- Interventions put in place when there is evidence that there is a likelihood of problems emerging in the future
- Strong relationships between practitioners and families facilitating positive, transparent and effective interactions
- Effective strategic collaboration and oversight through the Partnership

Context

Preventative services can do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services¹. Research also tells us that factors which create gaps in children's wellbeing and development can be positively influenced by early help, to deliver substantial individual and social benefits over time. High quality early help can create positive impact stretching beyond childhood into adulthood².

The estimated population of children in Hounslow which will benefit from the Partnership Commitment is sizeable and diverse, including but not limited to those who are:

Affected by multiple needs such as worklessness, reduced participation in education, physical/mental health needs and offending	4000+
Eligible for Special Educational Needs Support	6000
Receiving targeted Public Health intervention	1000+
Classed as persistent absentees	4000
Living in the bottom 20% deprivation nationally	10 000
Estimated by Public Health England to have emerging mental health needs	4300
Not in Employment, Education or Training	300
Eligible for Free School Meals at any point in last 6 years	10 000

**estimated figures as of November 2018*

Children and families in Hounslow currently have access to a broad spectrum of interventions which are specifically designed to be effective in meeting need early. This Early Help Offer is underpinned by strong delivery within universal services. There is commitment and impetus between partners to developing the borough's approach to early help, as recognised in the 2018 [Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services](#), and evidence of good practice within individual services and settings, for example as highlighted in the 2017 [Joint Targeted Area Inspection](#).

However, a number of factors make commitment to a new Partnership Commitment timely. Demand is rising for specialist interventions such as Looked After Child status, Child Protection plans, Education, Health and Care plans and tier 3 CAMHS services, while local rates of deprivation, and prevalence of issues such as childhood obesity, tooth decay and self-harming, are additional indicators of vulnerability and longer-term need. Concurrently, our population is increasing within a national and local context of savings targets for public services.

Early help has been highlighted as a priority area for development within both the [Hounslow Joint Children and Young People's Strategy 2017-2020](#) and the recent Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services. An external review of long-term demand management has taken place within LBH children's services recommending a focus on early help, and the Department for Education's [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), which provides statutory guidance for early help, has been updated. In addition, the national Troubled

¹ Munro, Review of Child Protection: A child-centred system

² Early Intervention Foundation

Families programme, which provides funding locally to the Hounslow Families First service, will cease in 2020, requiring mitigation planning to deliver legacy arrangements for intensive early help services.

Aims

The overarching aim of this new Partnership Commitment is two-fold:

- 1) to harness the total resource we have available in the Partnership to ensure that, wherever possible, any presenting need within a family is resolved at an early stage: to prevent both adverse experiences for families and avoidable, costly escalation to specialist services
- 2) to harness the total resource we have available in the Partnership to develop early help as an effective, sustainable approach to demand management of our services into the future

In short, that children and young people in Hounslow receive effective support at the earliest stage possible and at the lowest, most financially efficient level appropriate to their needs.

Within this overarching ambition, the Partnership Commitment will aim to:

- address the areas for development identified within the Hounslow Joint Children and Young People's Strategy and in the 2018 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services
- formalise our commitment to working as a strategic Early Help Partnership
- create a consistent and co-ordinated early help approach, so that all services which deliver early help work as a single system rather than as individual agencies
- meet the recommendations of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- interface with legacy arrangements for cessation of the national Troubled Families programme
- support any future early help commissioning intentions and development of the market

Early Help as the 'golden thread'

Effective early help for families is the foundation not just for thriving children but also for thriving adults and thriving communities. Thus, the Partnership early help programme will stretch across areas wider than those based within children's services directly, in order that early help may become a 'golden thread' running through the offer in the borough.

There is potential for links to be developed through 2019-2021 with areas such as:

- Knife Crime
- Early intervention for adults, particularly in the areas of mental health, DV and substance misuse
- Reducing Parental Conflict
- Safer communities
- Homelessness prevention
- Universal community services (for example the offer in libraries)

Defining Early Help in Hounslow

Early help is the principle of providing support to children and their families at an early stage to prevent difficulties from worsening, at any point in a child's life from early years through to entry into adulthood. It may also be delivered in anticipation of problems before they emerge, where vulnerabilities which are known predictors to future need can be identified.

Children and families in Hounslow whose level of need has been identified as sitting at tier 2 of the [Hounslow Continuum of Need](#) – 'additional needs' - are those who will be supported through early help. This includes both those who are experiencing emerging need which has not yet escalated, and those who may have previously been supported by specialist interventions but whose level of need has reduced and can be supported at a lower level.

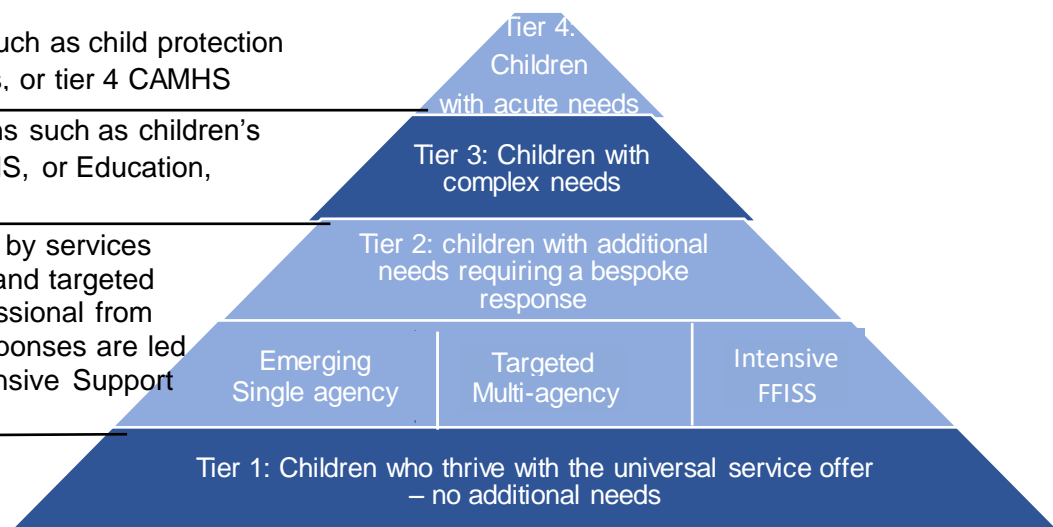
The level of need encompassed at tier 2 is broad and can be split into three sub-sections: emerging need which can be supported by a single agency, targeted need which requires a co-ordinated multi-agency Team Around the Family response, and intensive need with a response led by the Families First & Intensive Support Services.

Threshold for acute interventions such as child protection enquiries, Looked after Child status, or tier 4 CAMHS

Threshold for specialist interventions such as children's safeguarding services, tier 3 CAMHS, or Education, Health and Care Plans

Threshold for delivery of early help by services across the Partnership. Emerging and targeted responses are led by a Lead Professional from Partnership services; intensive responses are led specifically by Families First & Intensive Support Services

Universal service offer such as access to education, GPs and Public Health services



Early Help Principles

All early help activity across the Partnership will be delivered in accordance with the following principles:





Outcomes for Children & Families

We recognise that improved outcomes for children and families are rarely attributable to one intervention in isolation and are often the product of multi-agency input and multiple factors. Thus, the outcomes we aspire to achieve through the Partnership Commitment reflect holistic impact on children through the combined efforts of the Partnership:

1. Children & young people are supported to stay within their family home.
2. Young people are supported to avoid becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.
3. Children & young people are supported to learn and are making progress within education.
4. Children & young people are supported to remain in school.
5. Attendance is good and we know which of our children & young people are not in school.
6. Children & young people are supported to stay safe and resilient to risk of exploitation.
7. Young people are engaged in positive activities and supported to access education, employment and training opportunities.
8. Children & young people have good physical and emotional health and lead healthy lifestyles.
9. Parents and carers are supported to help reduce parental conflict in the home.
10. Children & young people's needs are met without requiring specialist interventions.

Our Priorities

We will:

1. Ensure that there is a range of interventions available across the Partnership which are dedicated to meeting need early. These will be evidence-based, deliver value for money, and provide good fit against the needs of our residents and drivers of demand for specialist services.

We will achieve this by:

- Mapping and analysing our partnership interventions offer in order to understand current strengths and gaps.
- Developing the intelligence required to understand how our partnership resources can best be targeted to meet local needs and mitigate against drivers of demand.
- Considering where commissioning of services and development of the market may support our Early Help Offer.
- Applying ongoing learning from research and other Local Authorities in terms of 'what works'.
- Defining and publishing our partnership Hounslow Early Help Offer.
- Reviewing our Offer against a changing landscape, in particular with regard to legacy arrangements following cessation of the national Troubled Families programme in 2020.

2. Ensure that more families with emerging need receive help at the earliest opportunity, reducing the likelihood of early difficulties becoming worse. This includes empowering families to access interventions proactively as soon as they need them, and empowering practitioners to offer and locate the right interventions on their behalf.

We will achieve this by:

- Providing clear and accessible information, advice and guidance for families and practitioners on the Hounslow Early Help Offer.
- Compiling a Hounslow Early Help Offer for Schools.
- Developing the intelligence required to predict vulnerable groups in advance of difficulties emerging, and harnessing our collective resources to deliver timely and co-ordinated responses.

3. Ensure that all families receive a consistent, high quality, co-ordinated early help response from all practitioners across the partnership. This response is recognisable as the Hounslow approach to early help, is effective in meeting need and results in 'no wrong door' for families.

We will achieve this by:

- Bringing the multi-agency early help workforce together under a common identity and approach
- Developing a Hounslow Early Help Practice Framework which defines the agreed approach to early help delivery across agencies and disciplines in the borough.
- Creating a new Early Help Hub to embed the principles of Lead Professional, Team Around the Family and whole family working across all services in the partnership, underpinned by a new inter-agency Early Help Family Assessment and Early Help Family Plan format.
- Creating an easily recognisable early help brand, linked to a set of defined and published Early Help Service Standards.
- Developing a new Early Help Quality Assurance Framework.

4. Ensure that practitioners across the Partnership have access to the day-to-day support they need to deliver high quality early help as the preferred response wherever safe and appropriate to do so, building confidence and skills to bring about change for families without the need for contact with specialist services.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing an early help training programme for the multi-agency workforce, delivered by the new Early Help Hub in liaison with Hounslow Safeguarding Children's Board and other partners
- Offering practitioners dedicated points of contact within the Early Help Hub, for early help information, advice and coaching, including consultation on thresholds and guidance on approaches to working with specific families.
- Piloting the Community Action Partnership Panel to improve partnership working in local community areas, by bringing agencies together to find the best approaches to working with individual families and themes.

5. Ensure that agencies delivering early help across the Partnership work together and are evaluated together as a single strategic and operational system, with resources becoming a co-ordinated 'sum of all parts' to achieve maximum impact for families and best value for money.

We will achieve this by:

Creating a new Hounslow Early Help Hub, which will act as the borough's focal point for the co-ordination and strategic oversight of multi-agency early help activity. The Hub will facilitate:

- Streamlined and seamless pathways for families and practitioners both within multi-agency early help and interfacing with universal and specialist services.
- Whole-borough oversight for data analysis, quality assurance and co-ordinated multi-agency responses to trends and themes
- Co-ordination of the Hounslow Early Help Offer
- Development and delivery of the Hounslow Early Help Practice Framework
- Day-to-day practice support for practitioners
- Improved tracking systems for children recommended for, or receiving, early help
- Quarterly Partnership activity, impact and financial reporting against a new Early Help Performance & Impact Framework

6. Ensure that the partnership strategy is able to remain flexible and responsive to the changing needs and trends of our borough.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing the intelligence and reporting mechanisms required to be informed of changing needs and trends.
- Utilising the Early Help Strategy Group as a partnership forum for identifying themed priorities for time-limited pieces of work within the period of the overarching Partnership Agreement.

Governance and Evaluation

The Partnership Early Help Strategy Group will hold accountability for the monitoring and development of this Partnership Agreement, reporting into the borough's Children's Delivery Group and to LBH CLT and Members on a quarterly basis. Reporting will also take place to the Hounslow Safeguarding Children's Board as required.

The progress of the Partnership Commitment will be evaluated on a quarterly basis using the agreed Early Help Performance & Impact Framework. A final evaluation will be undertaken of the period as a whole to determine direction beyond 2021.

Hounslow Early Help Partnership

The Hounslow Early Help Partnership has been established to plan and oversee, collaboratively, the development of early help in the borough: both to reap the benefits for the borough's children and families and to support the financial sustainability of our collective resources into the future as our population grows and demand rises.

As a Partnership, we recognise the importance of intervening early where children and their families face difficulties. We commit to working together to maximise quality of early help in Hounslow, and to sharing accountability for the implementation, monitoring and success of this Partnership Agreement. We also commit within our individual agencies, according to context, to work proactively towards:

1	Including our services in the single referral tool for the Early Help Offer
2	Utilising a single borough inter-agency early help assessment and plan template, to support coordinated working where families are receiving early help from multiple agencies
3	Participating actively in Lead Professional and Team Around the Family as the borough's preferred model for co-ordinated multi-agency early help delivery, as appropriate to our individual roles
4	Utilising a single inter-agency electronic recording system for early help referrals, assessments and plans
5	Displaying a single Hounslow Early Help Offer branding alongside organisational branding where early help services are being delivered - on electronic communications, and on new batches of letterheads, leaflets etc.
6	Participating in the Community Action Partnership Panels
7	Sharing of agreed and appropriate data with LBH to maintain the Early Help Performance and Impact Framework and sharing of information within the Partnership in accordance with the Information Sharing Agreement
8	Regular attendance and active contribution from a representative at the borough's Early Help Strategy and Operational Groups

