



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

RBKC & WCC Health & Wellbeing Board

25 November 2021

Date:	
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Title:	Early Help Strategy
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Wards Involved:	All
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1. Executive Summary

A local strategy for the development of early help for children and families has been developed and confirmed by the Early Help Partnership which was established in Kensington and Chelsea in February 2020. This report seeks to bring the attention of the Health and Wellbeing Board and invite comment and wider developments which will support the implementation of the Strategy.

2. Background

- 3.** A local Early Help Partnership was set up in Kensington and Chelsea in February 2020. The aim of the Partnership was to bring together partners from a range of agencies to look at the development and implementation of a collaborative approach to Early Help, the Family Hubs and the Youth hubs.
- 4.** It was planned that the Partnership would agree a collective strategy, actions and shared principles for Early Help across the 0- 19 years age group (or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

5. The Partnership was also designed to provide a forum through which partners could inform and update each other about key service developments, opportunities or changes to priorities which are likely to have a local impact and to which a multi-agency response would be beneficial. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic shortly after the launch of the Partnership, this body played an essential role in co-ordinating and using multi-agency resources effectively to support families during periods of lockdown and beyond.
6. There has been significant learning and development of innovative practice during this period. A “Virtual Children’s Centre Offer” has subsequently been cited by the Local Government Association as an example of good practice. Through this a Children’s Centre remained open during lockdowns, providing virtual support and activities and the distribution of resource packs, vitamins and food to help cohorts of families with different needs. Partnership working between children’s centre and Early Help staff, Maternity Champions, health visitors, midwives, speech and language therapists and social workers was central to this coordinated response. As lockdown eased, ‘safe space’ services were offered from two sites where face to face appointments could be offered to families. More recently, the approach adopted at this time has been shortlisted for a *Children and Young People Now* national award under the Early Years category.
7. In parallel, a series of workshops and consultations took place with managers and practitioners from different agencies across the Partnership to develop the Early Help Strategy. As well as tracking and reflecting the changes in need and service responses prompted by the pandemic, the North Kensington Grenfell Recovery programme has been a key area of focus, to consider help needed by affected parents and children. The Strategy was agreed by the Partnership in April 2021. It was also presented to the Lead Member for Family and Children’s Services in May 2021. The Strategy is included in this report in Appendix A.
8. The Early Help Partnership continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis and is driving the implementation of the Early Help Strategy. Over the summer of 2021, an “integrated leadership team” was set up for the two Family Hubs in the North and South of the borough. These teams have identified priorities from the Strategy to focus on over the forthcoming months. Most recently, a draft Action Plan for the Strategy as a whole was presented to the Early Help Partnership. This reviewed each of the Visions or Ambitions in the Strategy and identified actions that are taking place or planned to ensure progress is made to deliver on these. The Action Plan is attached to this report in Appendix B.
9. **Recommendations**
10. The Health and Wellbeing board is requested to review the Strategy and Action Plan and invited to comment, particularly in relation to wider developments or opportunities across agencies in Kensington and Chelsea which might contribute to the delivery of the Strategy.