

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

FAMILY SUPPORT STRATEGY

JUNE 2003

EXECUTIVE
21ST JULY 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

Brent Children's Family Support Strategy is part of the Brent Children and Young People Strategic Plan 2003-2004. The Children and Young People Strategic Plan includes other strategic plans produced by partners. The Youth Justice Plan, the Behaviour Improvement Plan, the Health Improvement Plan all contribute to strategic planning to improve outcomes for Brent's children.

By September 2003, the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan will be incorporated into the Local Preventative Strategy which has been commissioned by the Brent Local Strategic Partnership.

The Children and Young People Priority Action Group (a sub-group of the Brent Health and Social Care Partnership Board) is the multi-agency strategic planning group for Brent and ratifies all strategic plans produced by partners.

The Children and Young People Priority Action Group has agreed the vision, principles and outcomes for children and young people in Brent. These set out the strategy for family support within a multi-agency approach and in partnership with children and young people and their families.

2. THE VISION STATEMENT

The attainment of an integrated multi-disciplinary family support service for children, young people and their family with the overall aim of maximising families strengths and potential and to reduce the numbers families requiring statutory services and interventions.

3. THE PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The need of children and young people are of paramount concern when planning family support services.
- 3.2 Services will be delivered in ways which ensure equality of access regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- 3.3 Services will be delivered in the most enabling environment possible, using community based or family settings.
- 3.4 Services will be flexible and sensitive and planned to accommodate individual needs.

- 3.5 Services will be planned and delivered in the most effective ways possible with an emphasis on interagency working. The quality of services will be regularly monitored.

4. THE OUTCOMES

The CYPPAG have adopted six key outcomes as identified by the Children and Young People's Unit. The Family Support Strategy aims to achieve these outcomes for Brent's children through Family Support Services and statutory services in each agency. These will be delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector and families.

Health and well being - Development of a healthy lifestyle, opportunity to achieve optimum health and well-being within the context of high quality preventive and treatment services. Children and young people should have the resilience, capacity and emotional well-being that allows them to play, learn, relate to other people and resolve problems in life.

Achievement and enjoyment - To fulfil goals and ambitions, success in their academic, educational, social and cultural development; to be recognised and have the means to engage in constructive play and leisure pursuits for their own sake.

Participation and citizenship - To be able to be involved in the life of their local community, be active citizens with an understanding of their role in democratic society. To be empowered to express their views about their community and society as whole.

Protection - To be brought up in a safe and secure environment, free from violence, abuse and harassment at home, at school and in the community. To seek help when they; need it from accessible, dependable and comprehensive sources of support.

Responsibility - To be brought up in a safe environment, free from crime, with the skills and confidence to make informed choices as they mature and to seek help when they need it.

Inclusion - To experience the benefits of living within a diverse society, where different races and ethnic groups live together in respect and partnership and where all forms of discrimination according to different backgrounds and circumstances are not tolerated.

5. THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

In recent years there has been a renewed commitment at central government level to improve outcomes for children and young people, with an emphasis on reducing social exclusion. The government, in common with local authorities, health bodies and the voluntary sector have high expectations for the nation's children and there is an increasing need for agencies to work together to ensure that services are designed to give every child an equal opportunity to develop and reach their potential.

There are many new initiatives and funding streams designed to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable children, for example, Sure Start, the Children's Fund, the Behaviour Improvement Plan and the National Service Framework for Children.

Delivering for Children and Families

This report sets out the Government's continuing commitment to high quality early education and childcare services and emphasises the key contribution that childcare can make to the experiences of children and their families as well as supporting the regeneration of communities by providing routes out of poverty. These services enable those parents who want to, to work, while delivering better outcomes for children across health, social and emotional development, crime and education.

Local Authorities have significant legal responsibilities for early years and childcare. The greatest success in developing good quality, sustainable and integrated early years services has been achieved where LAs have strategically led the work while making the most of the knowledge and expertise of their partners on the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. These successful LAs have demonstrated the effectiveness of:

- actively involving a range of departments such as Education, Planning, Social Services and Regeneration;
- forming effective partnerships with other agencies such as Health and the Employment Service; and
- providing co-ordination and coherence across related programmes such as Sure Start and the Children's Fund and working closely with Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships.

The Children and Young People's Unit

In July 2000, the Prime Minister announced new Government structures to better ensure co-ordination of policies and services for children. A Cabinet committee on Children and Young People's Services, chaired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was created along with a Minister for Young People. The Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU) was established to be accountable to this committee.

The CYPU has issued guidance and consultation documents and is also responsible for implementing and managing the Children's Fund, which aims to prevent poverty and social exclusion amongst children and young people.

Local Preventive Strategies

In October 2002, the Prime Minister announced that early in 2003 a Green Paper on Children at Risk will be published with a central focus on the identification, referral and tracking of vulnerable young people. Local Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships will be required to produce a preventive strategy for their areas which will build on existing plans and subsume Children's Services Plans which were required under the Children Act.

In 2002, a number of local authorities received guidance about the development of BEST (Behaviour and Education Support Teams) within the context of the Behaviour Improvement Plan which the local education authority is required to produce. The BEST teams are multi-disciplinary, designed to improve behaviour in schools, increase attendance and reduce exclusion. These teams, like Youth Offending Teams, encourage the development of co-located and multi-agency services and signal the direction of the way in which services for children will be encouraged to develop.

In these times of constant and rapid change Social Services Departments, Health Agencies and Education Services, in common with other public bodies, have to face increasing demands for services, with limited resources to meet those demands. In this context, the plans and strategies which help agencies to develop common agendas and identify priority actions, become ever more important in defining what service can be provided, and by whom.

6. THE BRENT CONTEXT:

6.1 A PICTURE OF BRENT

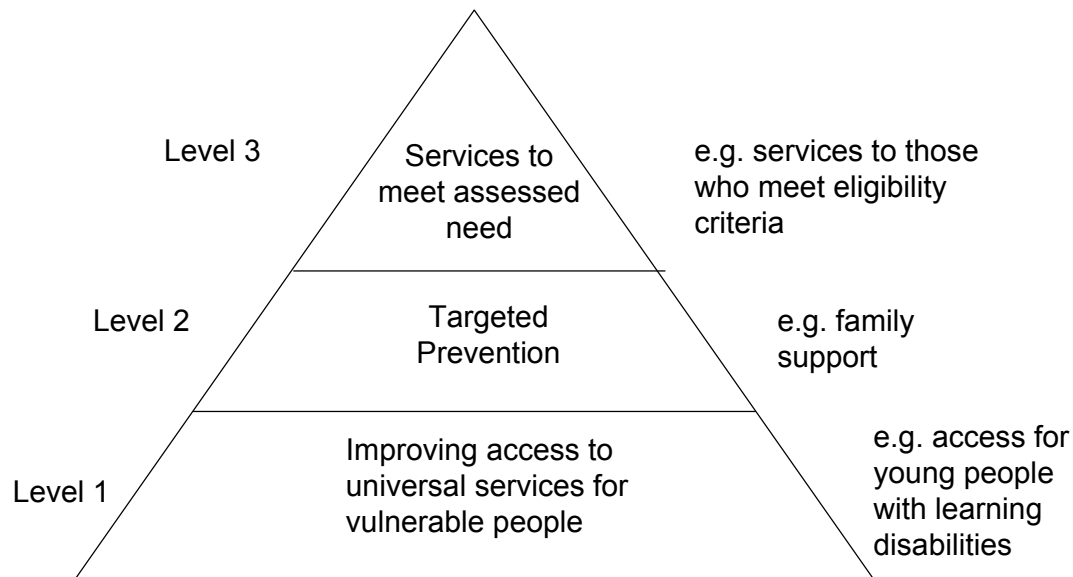
Brent is a dynamic borough. Its population is one of the most culturally rich and racially diverse of all the local authorities in England and Wales.

Brent is also a borough of significant contrasts in terms of its physical and social character. Inner city urban conditions sit alongside a more prosperous suburban life.

Whilst some areas in the south of Brent such as Harlesden, South Kilburn and Stonebridge experience high levels of social deprivation, including high levels of unemployment, over crowding and poor housing, parts of the north of the borough reflect a more comfortable lifestyle with more open spaces where recreational activities can be enjoyed.

6.2 MODEL OF SERVICE

The overall shape of service we seek to deliver is a 3-tier model.



Currently, we mostly provide for Level 3. We have eligibility criteria that determines whether children and young people are eligible for an assessment and following an assessment their priority for service provision.

There will be more opportunities for extending our activity into Levels One and Two through:

- Partnerships such as Sure Start and On Track
- Use of specific government grants e.g. Quality Protects
- Accessing other sources of finance e.g. European funding
- New Deal and Neighbourhood Renewal
- Extending partnership working with health, housing and education.

Set out below are some of the key data collected from the Greater London Authority, health agencies, local performance information and other consultation findings.

Education

- 73 % of pupils in Brent schools are from ethnic minority groups with over 130 languages being spoken
- 22.2% (8422) of pupils on roll in Brent schools were identified as having special educational needs. Of these, 1160 had statements of special educational needs.

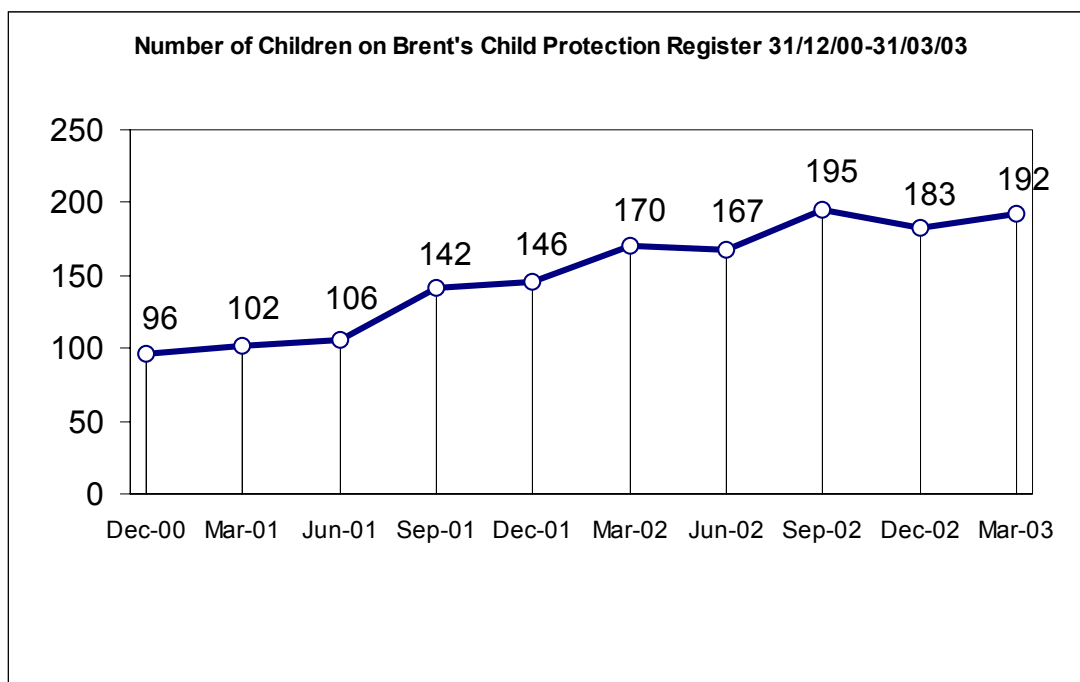
7. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Ensuring that children are protected from the risk of significant harm is of the highest priority with in Brent.

The following section details the increase in child protection registrations since 2000. It also highlights the continuing concern about issues of neglect and some of the other issues that are impacting upon parents abilities to care for their children. A significant feature for both children looked after and for those who are subject to Child Protection Registration is their age. The highest number of children on the child protection register are in the 5-9 age range and the highest number of children looked after are in the 10-15 age band. Clearly it is important that Family Support Services are developed to address the issues that parents are struggling with in these areas.

7.1 The Child Protection Register

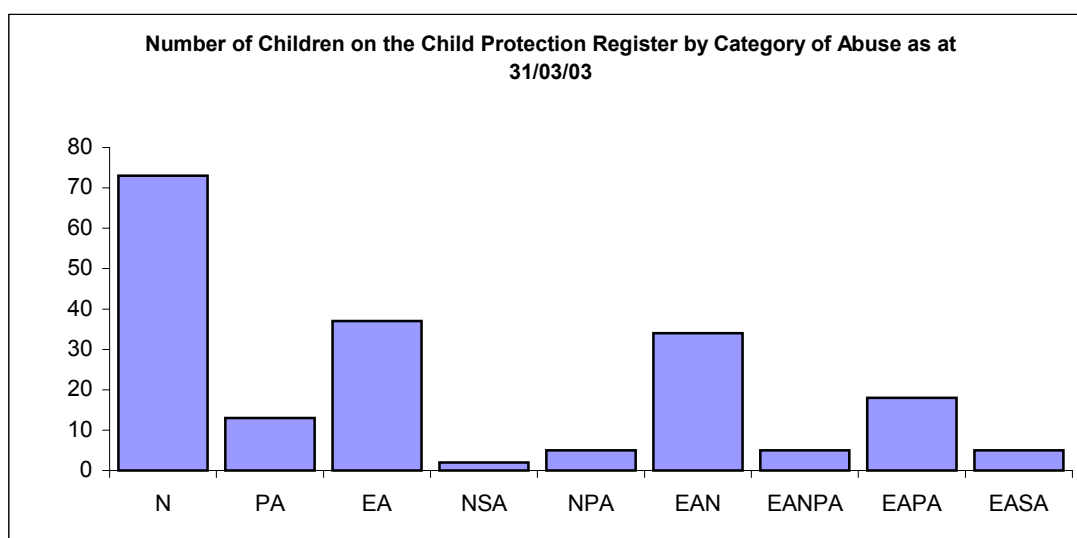
On the 31st March 2003 there were 192 children's names on Brent's Child Protection Register. 44 children from 31 families were placed on the Register during the quarter and 34 children from 31 families were removed.



7.2 Categories of registration

The following chart shows the categories of registration for the children on the Register as at 31/03/03. This includes all multiple categories.

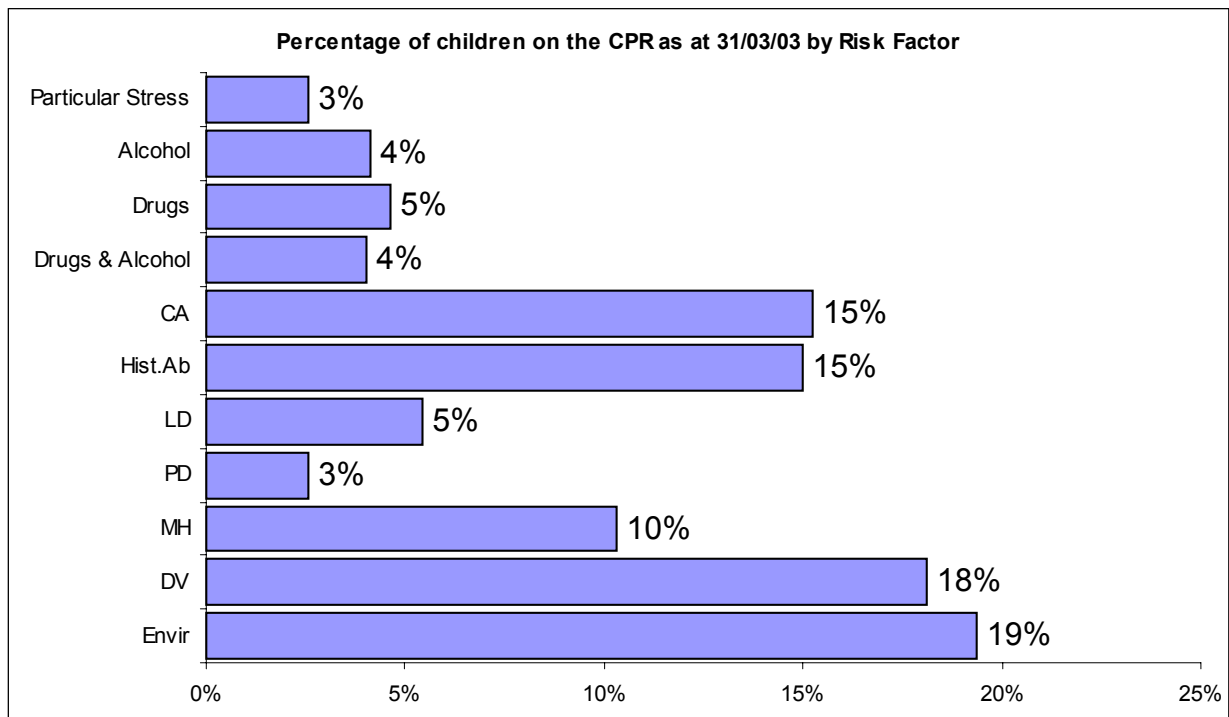
Key	N =	Neglect
	PA =	Physical Abuse
	EA =	Emotional Abuse
	SA =	Sexual Abuse



7.3 Assessed Risk for children on the Register

Below is a table showing the risk factors for children on the Register identified as a result of the risk assessment undertaken by the social worker and outlined in the report prepared for the most recent case conference. Clearly these risk factors may alter as work continues with the children and their families.

Key	
Envir	At risk from their environment
DV	At risk because of domestic violence
MH	At risk due to adult / parental mental illness
PD	At risk because of adult / parent physical disability
LD	At risk because of adult / parent learning difficulties
Hist.Ab	At risk because of a history of abuse in the family
CA	At risk because of adult / parent criminal activity
Drugs	At risk because of drug use / abuse
Alcohol	At risk because of alcohol use / abuse



7.4 Age distribution of children on the Register

Children on the Register fell into the following age groups

Age Group	Number of Children
Unborn	4
Under 12 months	14
1 – 4 years	55
5 – 9 years	66
10 – 15 years	52
16 plus	1
<u>TOTAL</u>	192

38% of children on the Register were under 5, less than the remaining 62% of children who were over 5 years of age.

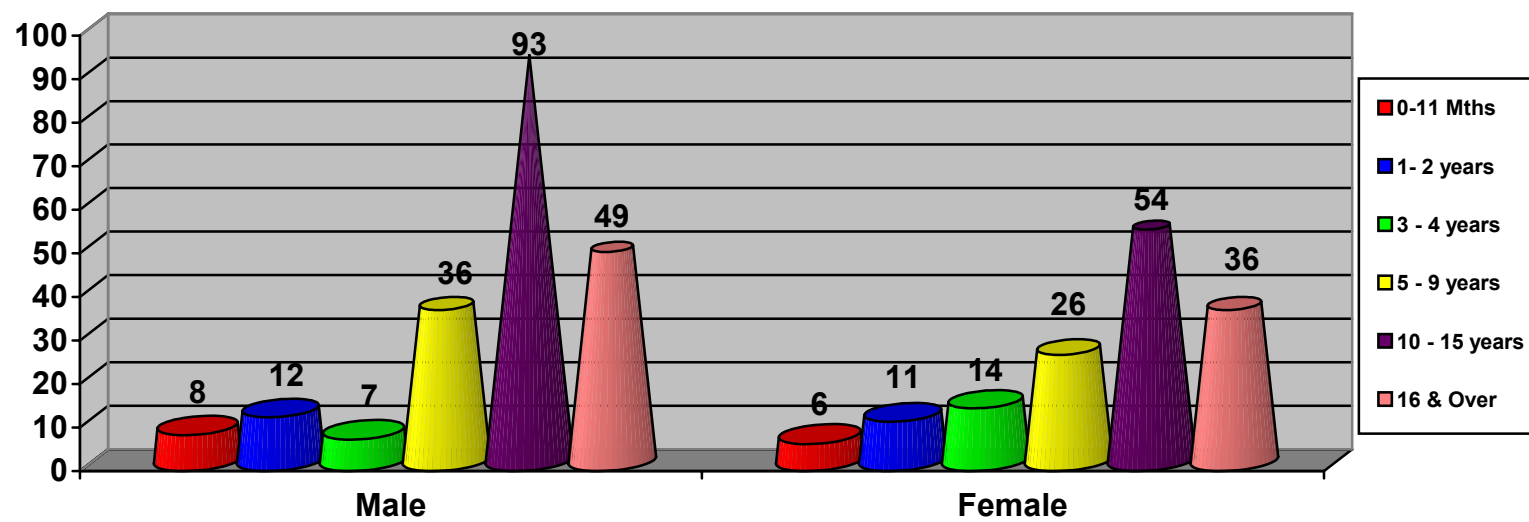
8. CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

8.1 Breakdown of children looked after by age and gender.

June 2003

	MALE									FEMALE							
		0-11 mths	1-2 yrs	3-4 yrs	5-9 yrs	10-15 yrs	16 & Over yrs	TOTAL		0-11 mths	1-2 yrs	3-4 yrs	5-9 yrs	10-15 yrs	16 & Over yrs	Total	
White British	A1	0	1	1	6	13	8	29		0	3	1	3	6	4	17	
White Irish	A2	0	1	0	3	6	2	12		0	2	2	2	4	2	12	
White any other background	A3	2	2	0	2	12	23	41		1	0	0	0	5	1	7	
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	B1	2	1	1	4	6	1	15		3	1	1	1	3	1	10	
Mixed White & Black African	B2	1	0	0	0	2	1	4		0	0	0	1	3	0	4	
Mixed White & Asian	B3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mixed any other background	B4	0	1	0	2	2	0	5		1	0	0	2	3	2	8	
Asian Indian	C1	0	0	0	2	1	0	3		0	0	0	1	2	0	3	
Asian Pakistan	C2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	1	1	0	2	
Asian Bangladeshi	C3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Asian any other background	C4	0	0	0	2	1	2	5		0	1	0	0	1	1	3	
Black Caribbean	D1	2	2	3	9	30	7	53		0	2	2	10	16	16	46	
Black African	D2	1	4	1	4	20	0	30		1	2	6	4	8	9	30	
Black any other background	D3	0	0	0	2	0	5	7		0	0	2	1	2		5	
Total		8	12	7	36	93	49	205		6	11	14	26	54	36	147	

June 2003



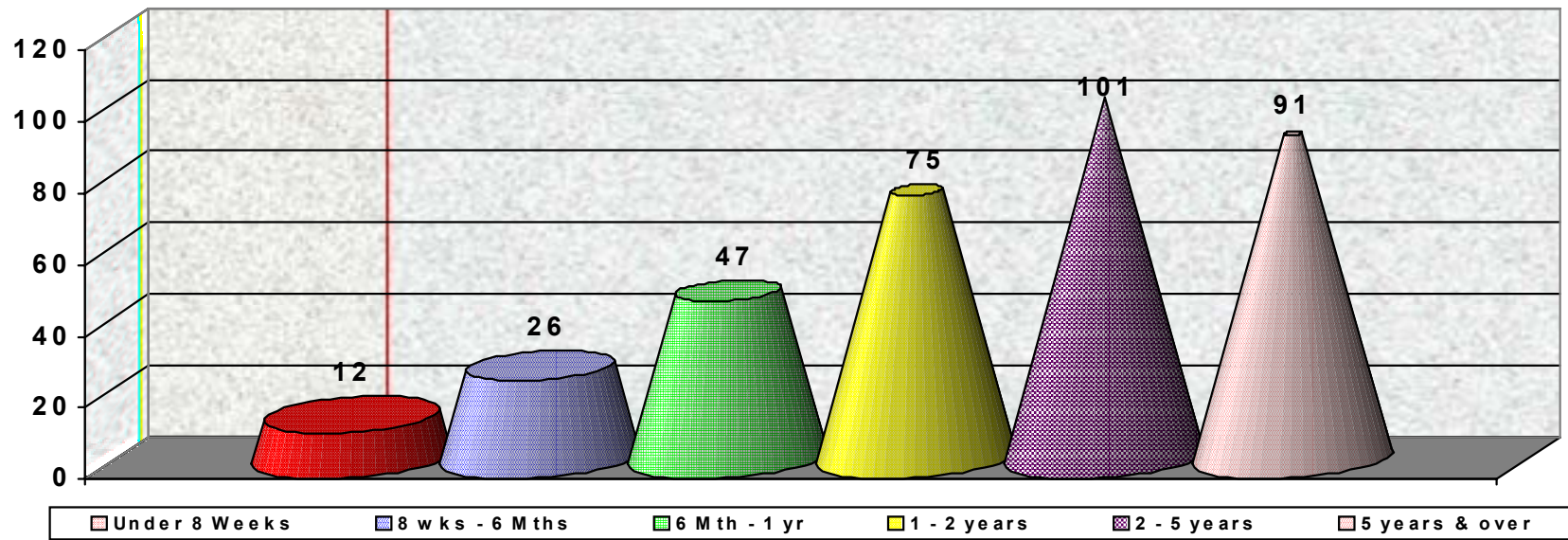
8.2 Duration of Looked after episode.

Children Looked After Age, Gender & Duration Looked After

June 2003

Age at 26/06/03	GENDER		DURATION LOOKED AFTER AT 26/06/03						
	M	F	Under 8 Wks	8 wks - 6 months	6 months - 1 year	1 - 2 years	2 - 5 years	5 years & over	TOTAL
0-11 mths	8	6	2	4	8	0	0	0	14
1-2 yrs	12	11	0	2	5	9	7	0	23
3-4 yrs	7	14	0	3	1	5	12	0	21
5-9 yrs	36	26	1	2	8	11	20	20	62
10-15 yrs	93	54	8	12	16	31	31	49	147
16 & Over yrs	49	36	1	3	9	19	31	22	85
Total	205	147	12	26	47	75	101	91	352
% Duration Looked After			4%	7%	13%	21%	29%	26%	

June 2003



9. CURRENT INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES IN BRENT

9.1 Current Initiatives Supporting Families

The Voluntary Sector Picture in Brent

The range of voluntary sector providers in Brent is too numerous to list. Those defined as providing “social services” are in excess of 130. Of these almost 50 appear to have a remit which includes family support services. Less than ten were well known to Children’s Services and of those, about half receive financial support directly from Children’s Services.

There is potentially an untapped reservoir of services that *could* offer support that families find acceptable and accessible but which may require considerable support in terms of capacity building. There are particular issues in relation to developing services that support families from diverse communities.

9.2 Service Level Agreements with Voluntary Sector Partners

There is an increasing need to be assured that the monies coming from the L.A. are delivering *value for money* services which support families who might otherwise need recourse to Social Services.

Brent Children’s Services reviews all existing service level agreements to ensure that partner agencies target more closely those children and families who require intervention.

In particular, we work closely with partners to ensure that services are provided to those families who are on the threshold of statutory intervention. We require regular monitoring information from all service level partners which will inform future service level agreements and service planning.

9.3 A Co-ordinated Approach

In addition we will dedicate resources to ensure we work more closely with government funding initiative including Sure Start local programmes, On – Track and Children’s Fund to maximise the potential benefits to families and to reduce further the risks of social exclusion. We have designated a senior manager to drive forward our commitment to integrated Family Support Services. We will convene a Children’s Resources Conference in October 2003 to bring all stakeholders together to begin to develop a shared vision for supporting families in Brent.

9.4 Current Service Provision

9.4.1 Voluntary Sector

B.I.A.S. – Social Worker	£30k
Welcare Accord – Contact Centre	£9k
London Independent Visitor Scheme – Spurgeons	£13k
Mencap – Play Development Worker	£23k.
Brent Family Service Unit	£122k

Brent Family service Unit has provided a range of family support services which has been largely funded by Brent Social Service Department. The unit was commissioned to train day nursery staff to run parenting programmes extending the range of services offered by Council run day nurseries. In addition, Brent FSU have provided a social work service to children in need.

In June 2002, Brent FSU decided to close the service in Brent, the resources will be used to provide family support services / parenting support to families most in need and/or at risk of family breakdown.

9.4.2 QUALITY PROTECTS

Quality Protects funding currently supports family support through:

▪ Brent Young Carers	£50k
▪ Play Service	£20k
▪ National Autistic Society (Brent Branch)	£11.8k
▪ Parenting Support Worker (FSU)	

9.4.3 SURE START CENTRAL £1,750,000

Provides:-

- Sure Start Play and Learn Bus
- Toddler Transport Service
- FSU Social Work
- Irish Family Support Project BIAS
- Parenting Support
- Crèche and Childcare Support
- English Support
- Reading is Fun – Reading Support

- Antenatal Support
- SALT – Speech and Language Therapy
- Bengali Family Support
- Parent Partnership Scheme (SEN)
- Portage
- Homestart
- Fathers Support Project
- Mitchellbrook Project
- Health Visiting
- Access a Smile
- Somali Child Development

9.4.4 **SURE START SOUTH KILBURN** £605K

Provides:-

- Reading for Fun with Brent Library Services
- Expansion of Book Start programme
- Toy library
- Child support team

Including:

- Sure Start Health Visitor & Supporting Nursery Nurse.
- Home Safety Loan Scheme
- Family Support Worker – Brent Family Service Unit.
- Speech and Language Therapist – Brent PCT.
- English as an Additional Language Teacher – Local Education Authority.
- Home visiting & Parental Support – Home Start Brent
- Additional toddler groups within Carlton:
 - Step by Step
 - Salvation Army
 - Carlton Nursery
 - Saturday Crèche

Smoking cessation programme

9.4.5 **SURE START ROUNDWOOD** £1,075M

Will provide:-

- Multi-disciplinary home visiting team.
- E.S.L teacher
- Drop-in & Playgroup

- Day care – Curzon Crescent
- Grants & Equipment
- Community Library Facilities
- Holiday Play scheme
- Childcare Grants
- Employment Support
- Smoking Cessation Support

9.4.6 **CHILDREN’S FUND PARTNERSHIP** £750K

Projects

Dual use Play Area
 Youth Crime Prevention Strategic Co-ordination and services
 Refugee Therapeutic Centre
 Domestic Violence Family Support
 Refugee Family Support
 Somali Supplementary School
 Boys 2 Men Family Support
 Therapeutic / Emotional Support in School (The Place 2 Be)
 Children’s Occupational Therapist
 Participation and Development service
 Play and Leisure for Children with Disabilities
 Capacity Building in the Voluntary Sector
 Solution Focused Family Support
 Refuge Play Worker
 Homework Advocacy
 Adanta Dance and Drama
 Brent Play Service
 Nutrition and Healthy Eating
 Pyramid Trust – Schools based support.
 Safe Parenting Handbook

9.4.7 **On Track Provision** £500k

- Multiple Intervention Coordinators
- AAGPAG – African and African Caribbean People’s Advisory Group
- ACH/SMS – African Caribbean Home School Mediation Service
- BIAS – Brent Advisory Service

- HIGH/SCOPE
- PLACE2BE
- PYRAMID TRUST
- SHAREPLUS
- SHARE
- SEEDS
- Rapid Response
- Breakfast clubs
- ESOL Classes
- Red Sea Project
- Persona Dolls (Child Talk)
- Male Engagement Programme.
- Summer Transition Programme (Vernon House School)
- Pilot Peer Support Transition Programme
(Between Copland Secondary And Oakington Manor Primary)
- A Club Home Work Support

9.4.8 Child and Family Clinic – Warranty House

The Child and Family Clinic provides child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to children in need, children with disabilities, children looked after by the local authority and children on the child protection register. The service is part of the Central and North West London Mental Health Trust.

In support of the CAMHS service, grant funding also provides a parental mental health worker, play therapist and educational psychologist to provide specialist services to families in need.

10. TRIPARTITE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS RESOURCES PANEL

This panel commenced in February 2003. Its membership includes representatives from Health Education and Social Services. Its aim is to ensure consistency in allocation of resources from all agencies supporting the families of Children with Special Education Needs. Its terms of reference are as follows:

- To increase the numbers of Children in Need who are supported in the Nursery Centres.
- To share agency information in relation to current assessments underway or services.
- To identify gaps in assessment or services provision and what action needs to be taken and by whom.

- To allocated SEN provision as appropriate, ensuring maximum use of specialist education provision.
- To prioritise children with SEN who are not eligible for education provision for SSD placements.
- To identify children with SEN already placed in SSD nurseries who are ready to transfer to an Education setting in reception at four years.
- Ensure any strategic issues arising from the panel are communicated to TEYG (Tripartite Early Years Group).
- To identify differences in eligibility criteria between SSD CIN and Education Statutory duties.
- Ensure only age appropriate assessments not at too early a stage.
- Ensure full info shared e.g. CDC health assessments, between all agencies.

11. **RECONFIGURATION OF CURRENT PROVISION**

- 11.1 Brent SSD currently offers nursery places to 120 children (wte) in four establishments. Of these 80 places are for children in need. This figure includes 26 designated places for children with a Special Educational need. A further 27 places are designated for children with a disability and 16 places are identified for fee paying placements where the child does not meet the eligibility criteria and the parent wishes to purchase care.

Education and Social Services have identified the need to ensure consistent resource provision for children with special Educational needs. In addition education are seeking to increase their capacity to offer nursery provision to children with Special Educational Needs. All consideration about future nursery provision is underpinned by our shared commitment to inclusive education and care for all children where ever possible.

- 11.2 Barnhill Nursery has been identified as a centre which could be developed to meet these objectives together with our shared objective with health to develop Children's Centre provision within the Borough.

The objective of any proposed development would be:

1. To provide additional education/childcare provision for children and families in Chalkhill, tailored to the needs of the local community.
2. To move towards the provision of a Children' Centre acting as a multi-disciplinary 'service hub' within the community.
3. To strengthen SEN provision for nursery aged children within the north of the borough.
4. To release funding to Children's Services to enable re-investment in family support work.

11.3 PARENTING SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Children's Services has worked in partnership with Brent Family Service Unit to deliver a comprehensive parenting support programme to parents of children (from 2-7 years) who are endeavouring to enhance their abilities to meet the needs of their children. The programme is based on the Webster-Stratton Incredible Years model. This is a well established model. It's effectiveness and ability to improve outcome for children and their families has been researched both in the U.S and the U.K.

Parents can be referred either from Social Services or the Health Visiting Service. The first programme commenced in early 2003 and will be repeated throughout the year. Future programmes may be run on thematic basis to support for example, teenagers who are parents, parents involved with child protection services and parents with a sensory impairment.

12. DEVELOPING FUTURE SERVICES

In partnership with Health and Education we are working towards reconfiguring existing provision and to develop Children's Centres in the Borough.

12.1 Children's Services will also work in partnership with the voluntary Sector to develop a Family Resource Centre. The services provided by the Resource Centre would include:

- Diversion services focussed at children a risk of becoming looked after.
- Services which provide family support to children and families who may not be as obviously close to this threshold at present and would not meet existing criteria, but may be at risk of returning with a higher level service and need if not supported.

- Multi-disciplinary assessment services, particularly in relation to proceedings.
- Family Group Conference Service.

12.2 Financial Considerations:

The Family Resources Centre provision outlined would cost £400,000 to £450,000. There are a number of sources of potential funding.

These include:

- Savings identified from reconfiguration of nursery services £250k.
- Quality Protects growth 2003/4 - £50k
- Children's Fund growth in 2003/4 £50-70K.
- Growth bid base budget 2004/5 - £100k

12.3 It is realistic to plan for the provision of Family Resource Centre/Children's Centre provision in 2004-2005.

12.4 We are currently in discussion with a large national voluntary organisation who have wide experience with Family Resource Centres to explore partnership arrangements with them.

12.5 In addition, the Identification, Referral and Tracking project in Brent will enable agencies to identify the numbers of children in need, the type of services they need and are receiving. There may be gaps between needs and provision and the analysis of the gaps should inform the development of enhanced family support services to meet the needs of those children who are at most risk.

12.6 In order for further family support initiatives to be developed, further funding will need to be accessed either by further reconfiguration of statutory Children's Services or by funding streams not yet accessed.

12.7 A possible model of family resource teams could be established as a forerunner to Children's Trusts. The focus of these teams would be to improve co-ordination of family support services with input from health, education, housing and social inclusion and voluntary sector services. These services could provide specialist advice on education, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, domestic violence and family support resources. It may be possible to reconfigure some of the resources already in place in different agencies and council departments to establish these teams.

12.8 Children's Trusts which bring together resources from partner agencies will need to be considered as an opportunity in the future. The Green Paper on Children at Risk due to be published in the summer 2003 is

likely to provide clear signposts for the development of family support and integrated service provision across the statutory and voluntary sectors.

- 12.9 A Family Support Strategy Group will need to be established reporting to the Children and Young People Priority Action Group (a sub-group of the Brent Health and Social Care Partnership 'Board) to agree the direction for Family Support following the publication of the Green Paper on Children at Risk.

June 2003