

London Borough of Brent Children & Young People Preventative Strategy 2004

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INTRODUCTION

by

Gareth Daniel – Chief Executive, Brent Council

Brent Council believes that every child and young person has the right to a happy and safe childhood, with access to services that will offer all Brent's future citizens the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Brent is a "young" Borough with 29% of its population under 19 years of age. For these reasons it is particularly important that Brent Council has "**supporting children and young people**" as one of the five key priorities in its Corporate Strategy.

The three key messages from this Preventative Strategy are :- Prevention is everyone's concern; Early intervention is everyone's goal; Success is everybody's business. This forms the basis of our collective vision for children's preventative services.

This strategy demonstrates our commitment to cross-agency planning and delivery of services. It identifies a range of services to fully address the needs of children and young people from all our communities. This range includes education, the youth service, health, social care, sports and leisure and is an essential part of the Council's vision to invest in local children and young people to secure their inclusion and achievement so that they may have access to the best possible life chances.

This Preventative Strategy will be a key part of Brent's response to the Children Bill and "Every Child Matters". It reflects Brent's clear vision, values and key priorities and reflects our commitment to the continuing improvement in services for all our young people.

Gareth Daniel
Chief Executive

FOREWORD

by

The Directors of Education and Social Services

This strategy provides the framework for all those agencies working with children and young people to ensure that prevention and early intervention is central to our planning and delivery of services. Shifting the balance to prevention is no “quick-fix” but requires all agencies to refocus their services over the next three years. It requires us to work together with communities, with parents, with partners in the statutory and voluntary sector, and most importantly with children and young people themselves.

Refocusing on prevention and early intervention involves better use of local evidence about need. Planning together over time we can provide more of what people need, where and when they need it. Improving prevention can avoid costly interventions at a later stage. Services also must reflect the cultural diversity of all our communities.

Preventative thinking is already well established in the Borough. We have good examples in our Sure Starts, in Children’s Fund/On Track, our Youth Offending Service and in our planned Children’s Centres and Extended Schools. There is more to be done and we need to be sure that we learn from what works and extend this across the Borough.

This strategy has been a while in the making and this reflects the changes and developments that have been taking place while we have worked on it. The Strategy in a sense reflects work in progress and it will be reviewed and developed further each year. The major development has of course been “Every Child Matters” and the Children Bill. This preventative framework will be a key part of the Borough’s response to the Bill and will inform the work on outcomes for children and to delivering the National Service Framework.

There is a challenging agenda for preventative services and we will build on key projects such as Information Sharing and Common Assessment, integrated service delivery and pooled

budgets, the Joint Commissioning Strategy and Safeguarding Board.

The strategy describes next steps and progress against these will be managed through the new Children's Partnership Board structures.

John Christie
Director of Education

Jenny Goodall
Director of Social Services

What is Prevention?

“the promotion of child well-being by enabling children and young people to develop their full potential, and

the promotion of family well-being by enabling parents/carers to meet the overall needs of their children and themselves”

Source: Sinclair, Hearn and Pugh (1996)

Introduction

Welcome to your local **Preventative Strategy**, the document that will help you over the next three years, focus on those children and young people who are most likely to experience difficulties later in life. **The aim of the strategy is to improve outcomes through intervention and additional support** and to do so by making preventative thinking the centre of everyday decision-making. The process of developing this strategy included a series of meetings, workshops and discussions with front-line practitioners, children and young people and managers at all levels. Extensive use of workshops and discussion groups will continue as our preventative thinking develops in the years to come, with an annual review of this strategy built into the process to facilitate the monitoring of our progress.

This strategy is not a document for the shelf; instead it forms part of a toolkit of strategic planning, which includes plans to improve universal, targeted and acute services. The Preventative Strategy will evolve and develop with us as our skills, partnerships and services move towards delivering better outcomes for Brent children and young people, families and communities in the short, medium and long-term.

Given our highly diverse population, with large numbers of children and young people in hard to reach groups including those seeking asylum, there is a lot more discussion needed to help us grow and develop to provide truly meaningful preventative services. The Council has stated its clear intention to forward this agenda as outlined in Brent's "Strategy for improving life chances for a diverse community", local improvement plan 2004 – 2005. You can find the full document on the Brent website.

Having a Preventative Strategy is a Government initiative. Chief Executives of local authorities were asked by central Government to take the lead in engaging all those responsible for providing services to children and young people age 0-19 years, with a view to developing a local framework to encourage greater emphasis on early intervention, thus providing the most appropriate level of support at the most appropriate point in time. The background to the initiative to develop local preventative strategies was that in general:

- Services did not put sufficient emphasis on promoting the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people and thus did not prevent adverse outcomes for this group, such as low educational attainment, offending or using drugs; and
- Local services were inward looking, focusing on their own activity to a great extent and were not sufficiently integrated in their approach.

The recently published Children Bill (Children Act 2004)¹ sets out the Government's plans for the future of children's services, giving those working with and on behalf of children and young people a clearer focus around issues such as joint commissioning of services and greater accountability for child protection. The Government also intends that the voice of children and young people is heard, through the creation of a Children's Commissioner for England. It is therefore clear that the Government's vision is of effective joint working between agencies to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people, through greater emphasis on integration, co-ordination and early intervention.

The Government's view is that children's social care services and education services have been too compartmentalised with funding too fragmented, resulting in services that struggle to work together. The Government aims to change this by developing structures that generate collaboration and partnership so that we can together provide wrap-around services that will deliver the key outcomes of the Children Bill, which are:

Being Healthy: Enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle.

Staying Safe: Being protected from harm and neglect and growing up, able to look after themselves.

Enjoying and Achieving: Getting the most out of life and developing broad skills for adulthood.

Making a Positive Contribution: To the community and to society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour.

Economic Wellbeing: Overcoming socio-economic disadvantages to achieve their full potential in life.

In addition the Government's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners² focuses on five key principles:

Greater personalisation and choice; with the wishes and needs of children, parents and learners centre-stage.

Opening up services; to new and different providers and ways of delivering services.

Freedom and independence; for frontline headteachers, governors and managers with clear simple accountabilities and more secure streamlined funding arrangements.

¹ White Paper: Children's Bill (Short Title: Children Act 2004) www.dfes.gov.uk

² www.dfes.gov.uk: July 2004; Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners

A major commitment to staff development; with high quality support and training to improve assessment, care and teaching.

Partnerships; with parents, employers, volunteers and voluntary organisations to maximise the life chances of children, young people and adults.

A key element of the development of integrated children's services is the Local Preventative Strategy which requires us to understand more fully individual needs and circumstances and respond to those needs as early as possible. To be most effective, statutory agencies need to link closely with our partners from the voluntary and community sectors, business and private enterprises to deliver seamless and wrap around services and so build-up in-Borough choice.

Brent Council's Strategic Plan for children and young people ¹ sets out the key aims in the development of children's services in the Borough:

- The improvement in the quality of services for all children and young people
- The identification of vulnerable children who need to be supported to benefit from the services available, and
- The development of community based services to support vulnerable children to enable them to achieve their potential.

In Brent, the key child care agencies have supported the drawing up of a preventative strategy to:

- a) Develop better joint working at the point of service delivery
- b) Reduce duplication of both assessment and service provision
- c) Make more effective use of Financial and Human Resources.
- d) Provide services tailored to meeting children and young people's needs

This document is a guide and sets out the strategic framework and priorities over the next three years. The strategy is evolutionary, it will grow as we change the way we work and increase involvement across organisations and the broader community within Brent.

Key Messages – Our Vision

Prevention is everyone’s concern; we need to develop our service delivery to ensure that our every day decision-making reflects preventative thinking and promotes better outcomes for the children and young people of Brent.

Early intervention is everyone’s goal; we need to develop closer synergy between the preventative strategy and other key strategies and multi-agency key targets, linked to fully integrated, multi-agency financial profiling.

Success is everyone’s business; each action (positive or negative) reflects beyond our own service area. We need to develop a ‘non blame’ environment to encourage collective ownership of issues, to develop better integrated multi-agency outcomes.

Key Actions – Our Next Steps

- ✚ Create closer synergy between the preventative strategy and other key strategies such as the Children’s and Young People’s Commissioning and Communication strategies, the National Service Framework and the strategic plans underpinning Leisure, Play, Regeneration, Housing, and Crime Reduction.
- ✚ Develop an agreed integrated multi-agency definition of “children with additional needs” that sets the appropriate threshold for preventative outcomes, in preparation for the Common Assessment Framework.
- ✚ Establish a local Safeguarding Board which will develop a robust framework of inter-agency accountability and have the capacity to monitor progress in ensuring the safety of children in Brent as services re-focus and develop.
- ✚ Develop integrated multi-agency holistic planning processes to mainstream preventative thinking.
- ✚ Create a cohesive overarching Early Years Strategic lead and plan, to build on the key role and function of Children’s Centres and link to extended schools development of ‘wrap around’ services.
- ✚ Prioritise the development of integrated multi-agency guidance, with agreed collective outcomes for children and young people, in partnership with service users and staff actively participating, promoting and implementing this strategic development.
- ✚ Develop preventative co-ordinated service delivery to include co-located, multi-disciplinary teams, working to the common assessment framework with a case management structure with links to pooled budgets.

Preventative Strategy: Aims

The aims of the preventative strategy are to promote positive outcomes and negate negative outcomes for children and young people as they grow up and to positively influence their lives as adults. If we succeed in producing better outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people it follows that we will improve their life chances and their capacity to achieve good outcomes as parents.

Positive outcomes include;

- **Reduction of** social exclusion
- **Creation of** stronger family and community relationships
- **Better** educational outcomes for all children and young people
- **Fewer** assessments finding the right balance between:
 - ✚ Diagnosis/Analysis
 - ✚ Prognosis/Risk Assessment
 - ✚ Intervention

Negative outcomes include;

- **Lack of agreed** collective understanding of 'risk of poor outcomes factors'
- **Continuing long** waiting times for access to services people see as inappropriate to their needs
- **Continuing** growth in the use of specialist / acute services
- **Lack of** in-Borough support to encourage educational achievement and participation and reduce anti-social behaviour

In Brent we already have a well developed joint working ethos and existing joint funded posts. ³ Through this strategy we are setting out the basic steps needed to address the major factors that stop children and young people from achieving their potential. These will require us to rethink the way we currently plan, commission and deliver our services, building on our local knowledge and experience of the very diverse community we serve.

The National Context

Notable case experience has played its part in influencing the Government agenda alongside academic research. The Dartington Social Research Unit^B completed a review of the literature to help local authorities in refocusing children's services to improve prevention strategies and found at least five benefits to refocusing services:

³ Example of Joint Funded Post: C&YP Joint Commissioning Manager Funded by Brent Council and Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust.

1. Improved inter-agency working
2. Increased efficiency
3. Improved experience of service users
4. Improved practice and outputs
5. Increased user involvement

The Dartington team also report that traditionally structural reorganisation has been the dominant method of reform in children's services. It is important to remember that structural reorganisation may be necessary, however not in isolation to other strategies, rather complemented and influenced by them. In Brent we intend to take an evolutionary approach to refocusing our services.

At a national level the main thrust of Government policy initiatives are aimed at:

- Reducing poverty and social exclusion;
- Tackling inequalities; and
- Supporting development and transitions

These policies are woven into a wide range of public service initiatives covering health, housing and social care, crime and disorder etc.

In recognition of the need to improve co-ordination in the delivery of its policies, in November 2000 the Government set up the Children and Young Person's Unit to take forward their investment. ^C The document "Tomorrow's Future" sets out the approach being adopted by the Unit and the policies that benefit children and young people. These initiatives build on and are complimentary to the statutory responsibilities of the Council and local NHS services.

The key strands of the Children Bill strategy are:

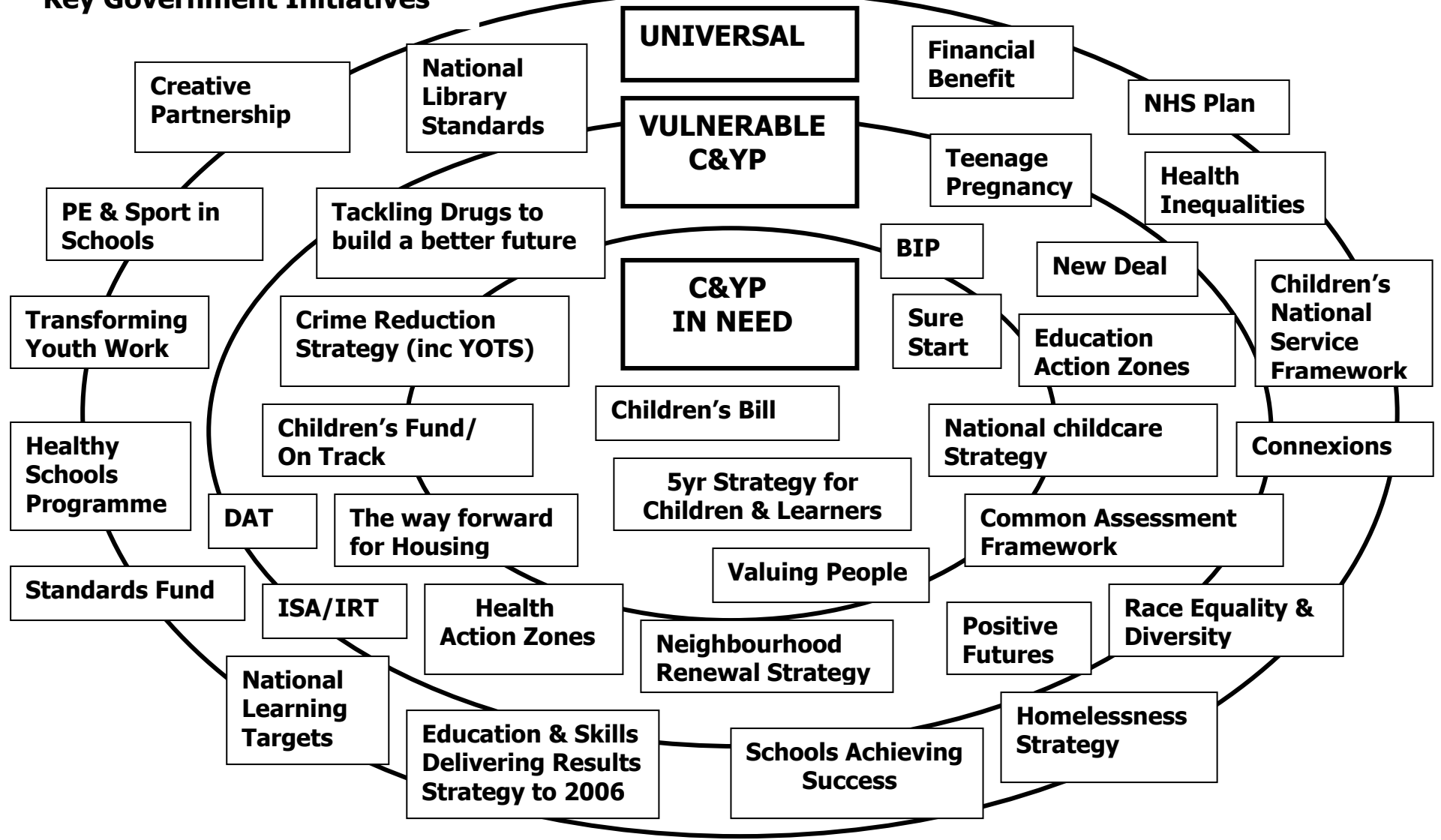
- ✚ Better prevention and earlier intervention facilitated by improved information sharing; a common assessment framework; lead professionals; and multi-disciplinary teams working in and around schools and children's centres.
- ✚ A stronger focus on parenting and families; developing better universal parenting services as well as targeting action and specialist support to parents of children requiring additional support.
- ✚ A workforce reform strategy with the goal of developing a high status career with a skilled and flexible children's workforce.
- ✚ Clear accountability and more integration through the structural changes that the Government sees as necessary, at both national and local level, to deliver this vision.

The key elements of Government initiatives are set out in the following diagram, which demonstrates the complexity of the local context in which a preventative strategy is developed. It also illustrates the interrelationship between universal services and services for vulnerable children and young people and those assessed as being 'in need'. 'Children in need' is a formal classification for children and young people who have been assessed as in need of the services of the Social Services Department to achieve demonstrable improved standards of health or development.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a central element of the strategy for helping children and young people and their families, linked to the Children Bill initiatives. The aim of the CAF is to provide one assessment, used by all agencies at the first sign of emerging vulnerability. The phrase we have used in this strategy to describe emerging vulnerability is "children with additional needs".

In the appendices you will find examples of work in progress. A key first step is to agree how we will implement the common assessment framework, based on an agreed local definition of "children with additional needs", that assists us to think and act preventatively. Brent currently has in place an agreed common referral process, through the work of the Area Child Protection Committee. Brent Children's Services uses a core assessment that complies with the Department of Health Integrated Children's System (ICS). The next step is to clarify the distinction between the more specialist assessment of children in need and in need of protection and the Common Assessment Framework.

Key Government Initiatives



The National Service Framework for Children and Young People

As part of its wider agenda, the Government has issued National Service Frameworks (NSF) across a range of service areas. The NSF for children and young people and maternity services sets out eleven standards which cut across current service and organizational structures e.g. integrated services for children and young people with disabilities and or children and young people with mental health issues. At the centre of the framework, is the intention to lead a cultural shift, resulting in services designed and delivered, based on the needs of children and young people using those services. The clear aim is for organizations to merge where appropriate to meet the stated objective. The full documents see the DfES website www.DfES.gov.uk the eleven standards are in three parts as follows:

Part 1

Standard 1: Promoting Health and Well-being, Identifying Needs and Intervening Early

The health and well-being of all children and young people is promoted and delivered through a co-ordinated programme of action, including prevention and early intervention wherever possible, to ensure long term gain, led by the NHS in partnership with local authorities.

Standard 2: Supporting parents or carers

Parents or carers are enabled to receive the information, services and support, which will help them to care for their children and equip them with the skills they need to ensure that their children have optimum life chances and are healthy and safe.

Standard 3: Child, Young Person and Family-Centred Services

Children and young people and families receive high quality services, which are co-ordinated around their individual and family needs and take account of their views.

Standard 4: Growing Up into Adulthood

All young people have access to age-appropriate services, which are responsive to their specific needs as they grow into adulthood.

Standard 5: Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Young People

All agencies work to prevent children suffering harm and to promote their welfare, providing them with the services they require to address their identified needs and safeguard children who are being or who are likely to be harmed.

Part 11

Standard 6: Children and Young People who are ill

All children and young people who are ill, or thought to be ill or injured will have timely access to appropriate advice and to effective services, which address their health, social, educational and emotional needs throughout the period of their illness.

Standard 7: Children in Hospital

Children and young people receive high quality, evidence-based hospital care, developed through clinical governance and delivered in appropriate settings.

Standard 8: Disabled Children and Young People and Those with Complex Health Needs

Children and young people who are disabled or who have complex health needs receive co-ordinated, high quality child and family-centred services which are based on assessed needs, which promote social inclusion and, where possible, which enable them and their families to live ordinary lives.

Standard 9: The Mental Health and Psychological Well-being of Children and Young People

All children and young people, from birth to their eighteenth birthday, who have mental health problems and disorders have access to timely, integrated, high quality multidisciplinary mental health services to ensure effective assessment, treatment and support, for them, and their families.

Standard 10: Medicines Management for Children

Children, young people, their parents or carers, and health care professionals in all settings make decisions about medicines based on sound information about risk and benefit. They have access to safe and effective medicines that are prescribed based on the best available evidence.

Part 111

Standard 11: Maternity Services

Women have easy access to supportive, high quality maternity services, designed around their individual needs and those of their babies.

The Context of the Preventative Strategy

NHS Local Delivery Plan

Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust (tPCT) identified their priorities within their Local Delivery Plan for the improvement of life chances of children and young people. These priorities will evolve in line with the NSF Standards and are designed to:

- ✚ Promote the secure attachment of children and young people to carers capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of their childhood;
- ✚ Enable looked after children to gain maximum life chance benefit from educational opportunities, health care, social care and other services;
- ✚ Address issues identified in the Kennedy Report ^D including preparation for and implementation of the first module of the Children's NSF;
- ✚ Engage fully with the ongoing development of cross-agency preventative work to support children and young people and families, including local preventative strategies, and the continued development of Sure Start and Children's Centres;
- ✚ Engage fully in the Children's NSF and its emerging findings which will set local standards and milestones for improvement in Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), including year on year improvements in access;
- ✚ Reduce Health Inequalities: initially focus is on the reduction of infant mortality and life expectancy at birth, and on reducing teenage pregnancies;
- ✚ Reduce Drug Misuse: To contribute to delivery of the National Drugs Strategy by reducing the harmful effects of substance misuse. This will be achieved through expansion and improvement of drug treatment services, and by contributing to the Strategy target to reduce the use of Class A drugs, and frequent use of any illicit drug by young people.

Brent Council Corporate Strategy

Brent Council have identified supporting children and young people as one of the five key priorities described in the Corporate Strategy. The priorities outlined below are an integral part of the Council's vision to invest in local children and young people to secure their inclusion and achievement, ensuring they have access to the best possible life chances. The Council's aim is to improve services for all young people so that by age nineteen, they will be in full-time education, work or vocational training.

- ✚ Provide children and young people and families in our most deprived communities with access to better health services, support with parenting skills and quality play facilities;
- ✚ Ensure that all pre-school children have access to affordable high quality child care services if required and a free early years education place for three year olds;
- ✚ Children of all ages and abilities will receive an excellent education to maximise their long-term life chances;

- ✚ Brent schools will deliver high quality, professional education services, which recognise the individual needs of all pupils;
- ✚ Looked after children will be provided with the best possible standards of health and social care; maximum opportunity to benefit from a stable and secure home environment. The Council will support them to achieve their full educational potential and gain access to future employment and/or training;
- ✚ The Council will work with partners to reduce the involvement of young people in crime;
- ✚ The Council will encourage all young people to continue in education or vocational training post 16 as part of the plans to achieve Government targets for further education;
- ✚ All young people will be encouraged to play a full role in the life of their local community, through a range of sports, arts and cultural activities;
- ✚ The Council will listen more closely to the views of children and young people and take their specific needs into account when planning Council services.

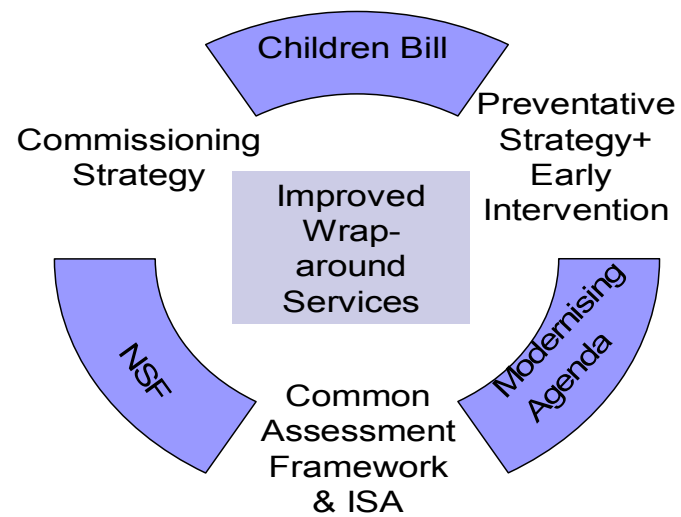
Brent Council's Desired Outcomes for Children and Young People

The rights of the children and young people remain paramount; their right to have a happy safe childhood and upbringing, which includes using the authority and duties we have to safeguard those at risk. The Council's desired outcomes stated in the children and young people's strategy closely match those of the Children Bill (see appendix under Work in Progress), which first appeared in the Green Paper *'Every Child Matters'*. A full copy of the Children's Strategic Plan is on the Brent Intranet.

One possible reason agencies are inward looking can be attributed to the high volume of work they have to respond to, with little chance of turning requests away. A long-term benefit of preventative every day decision-making is that, through early intervention, in time, you can stem the flow necessitating specialist and acute interventions, thus giving agencies the opportunity to look outward and think more creatively about the way in which they meet people's needs.

The Preventative Strategy is one of the tools needed to develop wrap-around services and therefore must be seen as part of a bigger picture encompassing the three main initiatives central to the development of integrated social, educational and health services, as set out in the following diagram.

The Big Picture



Refocusing in Context

Refocusing our services is not new, actually we are very experienced as **table 1⁵** shows, and if we are to continue to learn and develop then it follows that more change is necessary. The nature of being in a learning environment is to develop a reflective, self-evaluating organisation that recognises where change is needed and responds appropriately, striving to improve services.

Table 1 Historical Refocusing

Refocusing from	Refocusing to
Residential Care	Family-based foster care
Supporting Children away from home	Supporting children in their home environment
Separate services for children at risk of social, health and psychological problems	Mainstreaming services so that they can support all children, including those at risk
Separate processes for child protection and family support	Using family support as a primary mechanism to protect children from harm

Current Refocusing

Refocusing from	Refocusing to
Service-led Strategies	Needs-led Strategies
Processes and procedures necessary for an efficient bureaucracy	Practical support for practical needs, offered at the time children and families can benefit
Reliance on: >Tradition >Practice knowledge	Better use of: >National evidence to improve practice; >Local evidence to better understand local needs
Services designed for service users	Services designed with service users

Future Refocusing

Refocusing from	Refocusing to
Separation of services for the poor from provision for other children in need	Same provision available for all children (all children likely to be 'in need' at some point of their development)
Focus on intervention and treatment	Balance between: >Prevention >Early Intervention >Treatment
Emphasis on process and outputs	Services to improve C&YP's quality of life, reduce impairment to development and combat social exclusion

What do we mean by children at risk in the Preventative context?

In May 2004 at the Preventative Strategy Away Day we set out what is meant by 'Risk'⁶. Risk in this context means being vulnerable to the factors that may lead to poor outcomes, it does not mean being "at risk of significant harm" and in need of protection, therefore we are adopting the term "children with additional needs" to flag up that preventative intervention is required. Children with additional needs do not form a self-contained easily defined group; many factors may constitute a poor outcome for some and not others. However there are some factors more likely to have a negative effect on a child or young person's chance of achieving his/her full potential, these include:

- ✚ poor parental supervision;
- ✚ family conflict;
- ✚ lack of commitment to school including truancy;
- ✚ low achievement at school;
- ✚ involvement of friends in problem behaviour; and
- ✚ Parents who are ill.

Some children and young people are more likely to be at risk of poor outcomes such as offending, teenage pregnancy or substance misuse; these include those out of school, with mental health problems, with parents who misuse drugs or alcohol, who experience domestic violence, Young Carers who care for parents or siblings and those who run away from home. **This is not an exhaustive list.** (For fuller list see appendix)

Just because a child or young person is exposed to these risk of poor outcomes factors does not mean she/he will be 'at risk' from them. There are individual, family or community characteristics that can provide protection against possible negative outcomes arising from these risks. (See appendix) Protective factors will include:

- ✚ personal resilience;
- ✚ stability and security in family life;
- ✚ supportive relationships outside the home; and
- ✚ active involvement in school or college life.

Maximising the experience of protective factors will increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for children and young people in childhood and adolescence as well as their lives as adults.

Discussions continue to clarify our mutual understanding of 'risk' and what is meant by 'early intervention', only when these issues are truly understood collectively can we be sure that we are operating in a truly preventative way and develop services in-Borough to support early intervention.

This local preventative strategy begins the incremental process to support the refocusing of our **planning, commissioning** and **delivery** of services, to

ensure that our every day decision-making helps Brent children and young people get the service they need at the earliest opportunity.

Key Message 1: Prevention is everyone's concern

We need to develop our service delivery to ensure that our every day decision-making reflects preventative thinking and promotes better outcomes for the children and young people of Brent.

The successful implementation of effective Preventative Planning, Commissioning and Delivery is:

- ✚ Only effective in delivering better outcomes if prevention is at the centre of every day decision-making and with,
- ✚ Guidance provided and developed by key managers in partnership with service users and staff actively participating, promoting and implementing this strategic development.

Our First Steps: Preventative Strategy Development

To develop the preventative strategy we created a project team⁷ accountable to the senior manager steering group made up of representatives from Brent Council and Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust (tPCT). This team set the central tenet of our strategy; that we have to think preventatively every day to be truly effective and obviate the escalation of problems.

A priority for the strategy is effective early identification, referral and tracking (IRT now ISA) of children and young people at risk. This can be achieved via effective information sharing amidst a diverse multi-agency environment.

Local Strategic Partnership: 'Partners for Brent'

Brent's Local Strategic Partnership 'Partners for Brent' brings together public, voluntary and community sectors to provide a single overarching local coordinating strategic body and framework. This partnership has the remit to look at how to improve the quality of life for those living and working in the borough. The Government expects all local councils to set up an LSP to help prepare a Community Strategy designed to promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Borough, usually over a 10-year period.

A future for young people in Brent

Brent has a young population with nearly 29% of local people under the age of 19 years and this proportion is expected to increase over the next 10 years. The priorities outlined in this Preventative Strategy consciously develop a cross-cutting approach to address this growing population's needs. The range of services including child care, education, health, social and leisure facilities

form an integral part of the Council's vision to invest in local children and young people to secure their inclusion and achievement, ensuring they have access to the best possible life chances. Extensive consultation with young people in selected schools and on the Citizen's Panel highlighted that more services to engage young people in productive activities is necessary. A significant number of young people travel across the borough, collect in groups away from their home environment because there is little for them to do locally. This fact makes it difficult for young people to develop a sense of community and so they are less likely to engage with that community. The Brent Residents Attitude survey highlighted the importance people attach to a safe, clean, well-maintained environment free from graffiti, anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. Young people see the solution to this problem is to provide activities for them Borough-wide.

Six theme groups have been established to inform Partners for Brent:

1. Health & Social Care and Crime & Community Safety
2. Housing
3. Environment & Transport
4. Education and Lifelong Learning
5. Recruitment and Retention
6. Communication Sub-Group

Further information is available on
<http://www.brent.gov.uk/Corporateservices>

Local Priorities

The particular areas identified for attention within the strategy by local agencies through the Children and Young People's Priority Action Group, now known as Children's Priority Group (CPG) are as follows:

- ✚ Ensuring key professionals have knowledge and understanding of the services available at the universal and targeted levels. There are many services at these levels within Brent, often with different funding sources. There is a recognised need to co-ordinate these services more effectively.
- ✚ Develop targeted and specialist services from settings where universal services are currently provided, creating better synergy to achieving improved outcomes, e.g. extended schools, Sure Start, Children's Centers and Health settings.
- ✚ Increase involvement and participation of children and young people in the development of services, ensuring they are child centered.
- ✚ Develop improved services for parents at the universal level, such as affordable day care, improved health care and parenting support.

- ✚ Develop family support services at the targeted/specialist level, particularly for families who are just below the threshold of social services involvement, but still in need of intensive family support services.
- ✚ Research and action ways of making services accessible to the many minority ethnic groups that make up the majority of Brent residents and to hard to reach groups such as refugees and families living in pockets of deprivation within more affluent areas within the Borough.

Local Planning for Children and Young People

Children's Partnership Group (CPG)

CPG ⁸ is Brent's strategic partnership group for children and young people and it brings together all agencies and key stakeholders. Its task is to co-ordinate and provide a strategic framework relating to services for children and young people at risk and other vulnerable children and young people. (See appendix)

Whilst CPG provides strategic overview and direction, it does not replace or duplicate other partnerships or forums operating in the field of children and young people services. A key activity for CPG is to respond to the new Children's legislation and so the structure and function is currently under review. The new structure under discussion introduces an Executive group to provide a clearer strategic lead and it is intended to create a more dynamic strategic process through more extensive use of time-lined focus groups, whose task will be to apply preventative thinking to provide better outcomes, linked to the five key outcomes of the Children Bill.

CPG has commissioned an extensive analysis of services to identify gaps relating to children and young people at risk and in need. Through the collation of relevant demographic information and data from existing service programme plans, with more community data ward-by-ward, we will be in a strong position to plan future services more effectively by the end of 2004. The focus groups will move this agenda forward based on the agreed priorities for service development. This work is linked to the Information Sharing and Assessment Project which will develop a full and extensive Directory of in-Borough services currently provided.

Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy will compliment the longer term and visionary Community Strategy by specifically targeting deprivation in priority neighbourhoods. There is a significant linkage between the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and this preventative strategy in that the former addresses issues such as crime, education, employment, health and housing, all of

which can have a bearing on the “additional needs” factors for children and young people as discussed earlier.

Planning

The Council and its partners provide a range of services for children and their families; from universal services available to all through to targeted services for those requiring extra support and specialist services where crisis or long-term intervention is needed, set out in the now familiar triangle:

