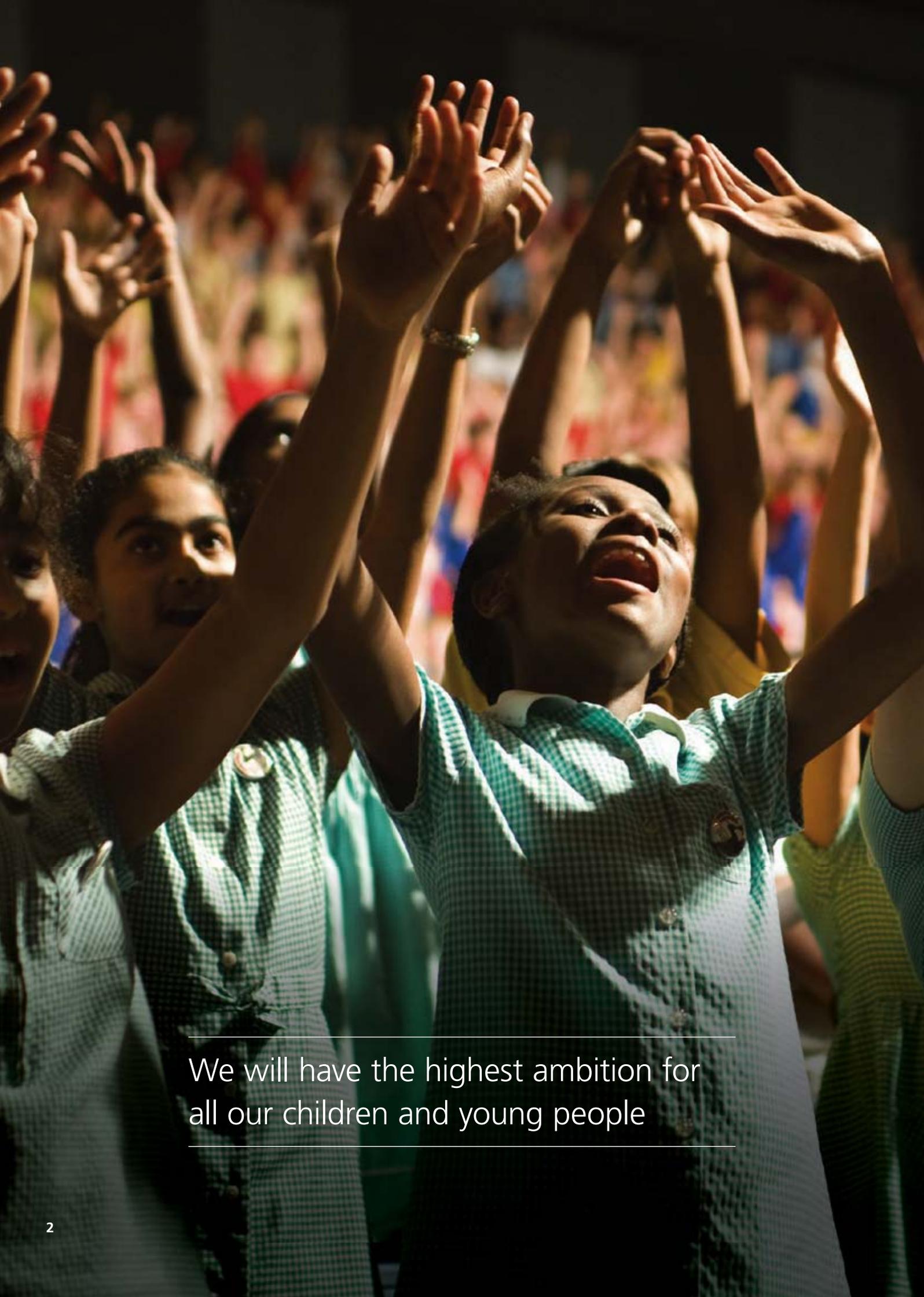


A Plan for Children and Families in Brent 2012-15

“Making a change
for the better”



Brent



We will have the highest ambition for
all our children and young people



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Foreword

Our Plan for Children and Families in Brent (PCFB) 2012-15 sets out the vision and aspirations of Brent Children's Partnership (BCP) for children, young people and families.

This is Brent's third children and families' plan. Together we have already achieved a great deal, but we aspire to do even better and continue improving services and support.

We know that some of our children and young people don't do as well or get as much out of life as others. We need to make sure they get the support they need. In an increasingly challenging financial climate, it is also important to use our resources effectively across the partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families.

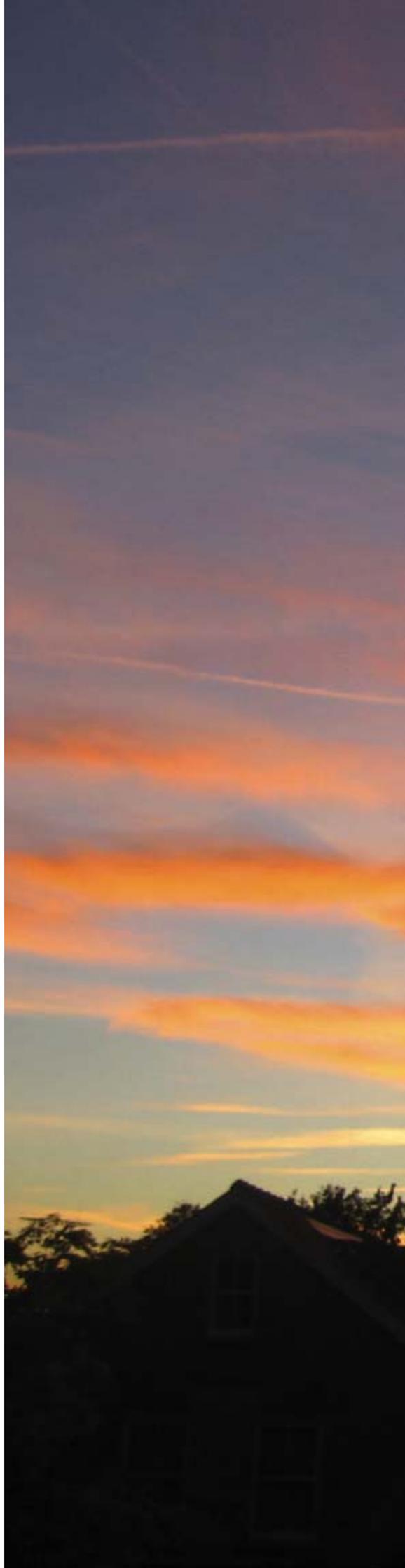
This plan was agreed by all in BCP and represents a shared commitment to helping all children, young people and families. It focuses on areas where partners can work together to make the most difference.

Krutika Pau

Director, Children and Families, Brent Council

Councillor Mary Arnold

Lead Member for Children and Families, Brent Council



Vision for children and families

The vision and values expressed in our Plan for Children and Families continue to underpin everything that we do to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families in Brent. The shared vision for the whole of Brent remains:

Together, we will make Brent the best place in London to live, work and learn

The Brent Children's Partnership's vision statement and values fully reflect this vision as it applies to children, young people and their families:

Together with families, we will improve the lives and life chances of the children and young people of Brent by ensuring that they are healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve and maximise their life chances to the full.

Our vision is supported by our values which are embedded in the work of all partners and demonstrated in the delivery of our services. They are as follows:

- We will put children and young people first every time
- Together with families, we will have the highest ambition for all our children and young people
- We will make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people.

Together, we will make Brent
the best place in London to
live, work and learn

Making this vision reality

To enable us to achieve our vision we have identified three strategic priorities:

Priority 1: Ensure children and young people in our borough are healthy and safe.

Safeguarding is a top priority if we are to ensure our children and young people are healthy, safe and protected from harm, abuse and neglect. Through early intervention, making a healthy start and by providing effective support for children and families, we will reduce the number of children coming into care or becoming subject of child protection plan and improve outcomes for children with disabilities.

Priority 2 : Narrowing the gap between those children who do well and those who need extra support to thrive, so the aspirations of every Brent child are realised. We must also ensure and there are sufficient school places to meet continuing increase in demand.

We will consider all possible strategies and initiatives to increase the supply of school places. We will improve the educational attainment of all children and young people, including looked after children, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children from black and ethnic minorities. We will focus on closing the gap between those who do well and those who may need extra support to thrive, to enable successful progression into adult life and employability.

Priority 3 : To fully integrate services to develop resilient families.

BCP is committed to delivering integrated services that focus on families and are designed to identify need early that provide targeted support and protection. We shall also continue to ensure that universal services are in place for all children, young people and families. We will help children get a healthy start in life and improve emotional health and wellbeing, tackle child poverty and support children and young people to take part in positive activities as well as giving parents the skills to get back into work.



Working together to achieve the vision

BCP is committed to providing clear strategic direction and making difficult decisions collectively. There is still much to do and the partnership is determined to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people in Brent.

During 2010, the coalition Government removed the statutory duty for local authorities to have children's trust arrangements in place, and also published details of health and wellbeing Boards in the health white paper 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS'. We have reviewed our partnership arrangements in light of these changes, and all agencies remain committed to maintaining the strong partnership arrangements that are in place. We have also reviewed our terms of reference for our Children's Partnership Board and strengthened further the emphasis on improving outcomes and impact. The BCP remains one of the five thematic partnerships of Brent's Strategic Partnership – Partners for Brent (PFB) and its members work jointly with the PFB, particularly to address areas of work which also have an impact on the outcomes of children and young people. This includes working with the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that public health priorities are met.

This plan focuses on the areas where partners can work together to make the most difference to children and young people.

We have identified the key areas of activity across the partnership that will help us to deliver improved outcomes. These 'building blocks' will support BCP to work effectively to deliver a vision focused on children and families, inter agency governance, integrated strategy (joint planning and commissioning), integrated processes and integrated frontline delivery.

National policy context

Environment in which the BCP operates has changed dramatically since the formation of the coalition Government in May 2010 and the change of focus on new policy statements around children and families. From 31 October 2010, the Government:

- revoked the regulations underpinning the children and young people's plan (CYPP) and withdrew statutory guidance on children's trusts
- removed the requirement on local authorities to set up children's trust boards and the requirement on those boards to prepare and publish a joint CYPP.

Although children's trusts are no longer statutory, BCP recognises the impact partnership working has had on improving outcomes for children and young people and is committed to driving the strategic direction of children and families services in Brent.

A number of national policy statements by the Government highlight the importance on early intervention, by tackling the root causes of problems early on and in a sustainable way, rather than just dealing with the symptoms. Funding arrangements, particularly the new public health funding and the un-ring fenced early intervention grant, further emphasise this direction.

The Government has commissioned a number of reviews in the area of early intervention and there is an increasing body of evidence of the effectiveness of early intervention with children and families. This is confirmed in the reviews by Graham Allen MP¹, Rt Hon Frank Field MP², Dame Clare Tickell³ and the Munro Review of Child Protection .

The Government's response to the Munro Review of Child Protection published in July 2011⁴ will see long-term reform of the child protection system to deliver and improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people. Professor Eileen Munro's review 'A Child-Centred System', May 2011, outlines a radical new approach to

improve the quality of child protection services in the UK. The review suggests significantly reducing central prescription and regulation and to develop child protection that is more responsive to local need, freeing professionals to use their expertise to fully assess a child and provide the right help. The review also underlines the need to improve the knowledge and skills of social workers, from training through to continuing professional development.

The green paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability also emphasises the importance of early identification and support, and providing families with confidence in, and greater control over, the services that they use and receive. The green paper⁵ promises to put in place a radically different system, giving

parents more control and transferring power to professionals on the front line.

The Government, through the Health and Social Care Bill, is introducing a statutory duty on local authorities to establish health and wellbeing boards to lead on improving the strategic coordination of commissioning across the NHS, social care and related children's and public health services⁶. In addition to this, public health will transition to local government and will have a central role in improving health and wellbeing, reducing inequalities with ring-fenced public health budgets to support the work.

¹ Early Intervention: The Next Steps [Graham Allen MP, January 2011]

² The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults [Frank Field, December 2010]

³ The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning [Dame Clare Tickell, March 2011]

⁴ The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report [Professor Eileen Munro, May 2011]

⁵ Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability – a consultation, [DfE March 2011]

⁶ Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for public health in England [November 2011]



What is Brent like?

Brent

- is the home of the iconic Wembley Stadium, Wembley Arena and the spectacular Swaminarayan Hindu Temple
- is served by some of the best transport links in London and the area is accustomed to the successful staging of major events
- has a young, dynamic and growing population. Our long history of ethnic and cultural diversity has created a place that is truly unique and valued by those who live and work here.

Brent's population

- 311,200 (Census 2011) people live in Brent. It is one of the most densely populated outer London boroughs with an average of 72 persons per hectare, compared to the outer and inner London averages of 39 and 99 respectively. The child population in Brent is 77,500 (Census 2011).
- There is an increasing population of younger children living in Brent – 4,545 extra school places have been created in the last eight years.
- 36 per cent of the population is aged 20-39 and 23 per cent are 19 or under with 16 per cent aged over 60 years.
- Brent has one of the highest proportions of black and ethnic minority residents in London. Approximately 71 per cent of the population are from an ethnic group other than white British.

Demographics

- Brent has high levels of social and economic deprivation in some areas. The borough is ranked amongst the top 15 per cent most deprived areas in the country.
- Families living in deprived areas are characterised by higher levels of long-term unemployment, low average incomes and a reliance on benefits and social housing.
- Over a third of children in Brent currently live in a low-income household and a fifth in a single-adult household.
- The proportion of our young people living in acute deprivation is rising with a growing gap in educational achievement between children from deprived backgrounds and the rising borough average.
- Brent has the third highest average household size in the country and overcrowding is a significant problem.
- Brent's communities are ethnically diverse. There are established communities of Indian, black Caribbean and Irish people living in Brent, however the proportions of children of these backgrounds are decreasing in Brent schools. The numbers of children from Somali (and other black African groups), Eastern European, Afghani, Iraqi and Hispanic backgrounds are increasing.
- Health inequalities are also greater in Brent, with significantly high levels of child obesity, particularly affecting children living in Harlesden and Willesden and children of black Caribbean and black African backgrounds.

Children in need

- Brent has 2,100 children in need including 386 (2011) children in care.
- There was an increase (258 in 2011 and 215 in 2010) in the number of children subject to a child protection plan, mirroring the national trend.
- Brent had more domestic violence offences per 1,000 head of population (8) in 2010 than the London average (7.4) and statistical neighbours (7.7)
- There has also been a reduction in crime over the last four years with significant reductions in gun crime, knife crime, robberies and youth violence, although they remain at a higher rate (per capita) than Brent's statistical neighbours and the London average.
- Teenage pregnancy rates have increased to 44 per 1,000 women aged 15-17; this is above the outer London average but in line with Brent's statistical neighbours.

Going to school in Brent

- There are 9,762 (22.1 per cent) children identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and another 1,390 (3.2 per cent) have a statement of SEN.
- 92 per cent of children attending Brent schools are from ethnic minorities.
- 65.5 per cent of our primary pupils and 51.9 per cent of secondary pupils speak English as an additional language.
- 37,493 children living in Brent attend a Brent school.
- 5,959 children who live in other London boroughs also attend Brent primary and secondary schools.



Our long history of ethnic and cultural diversity has created a place that is truly unique and valued by those who live and work here.



Improvements in the last two years

This section reviews progress against the key priorities of the Children and Young Person's Plan 2009-11, highlighting what has improved and where we still need to focus.

Children and young people remain safe and protected

Achievements in the last two years:

- We carried out more assessments for children in a timely manner thereby getting provision of help in more quickly. Brent was ranked second amongst our statistical neighbours and nationally for this.
- 99 per cent of children subject to a child protection plan and looked after children had their reviews completed within timescales, thus ensuring effective and responsive planning. This resulted in children not staying subject to a child protection plan any longer than they had to be.
- 94 per cent of looked after children participated at their reviews, showing that we listen to how these young people feel. Children and young people will only continue to participate if they feel their voice is being heard. Clearly these young people did.
- Fewer re-referrals were made to social care. There was a five per cent reduction in comparison to previous years, which means that more issues are being resolved at a child's first referral.
- A more stable workforce, with 81 per cent of senior social workers and social workers being permanent in social care, and we know that workforce stability is a factor which contributes to overall quality of service provision.
- The timeliness of new birth visits increased, as did the completion of safeguarding training and recruitment of health visitor staff, thus strengthening early identification of any potential problems which may arise for a family.

- Implemented a strengthening families approach to child protection which is more child-focused involving parents and stakeholders. The approach involves a comprehensive risk assessment. It is having a significant impact on reducing the number of children subject to a child protection plan, as well the length of time children have been on the child protection plan, so we know that issues are being resolved and that the child protection plan has been effective.

What we still need to focus on:

- Increasing the number of children that are either adopted, or placed with a prospective adopter, within 12 months of the decision being made to place them for adoption.
- Providing more stable placements for our looked after children.

Excellent education for all children and young people

Achievements in the last two years:

- Standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage improved significantly in 2011, bringing Brent's results to just below the national average.
- The gap between the lowest performing 20 per cent of children and all other children narrowed, bringing Brent's performance close to the national average.
- At Key Stage 1, performance at level 2+, improved for more children. This was in line with the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics.
- At Key Stage 4, performance continued to be above the national average for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* – C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, continuing the positive, improving five-year trend.
- At Key Stage 5, performance at level 3 (A level and equivalent qualifications) improved significantly and performance was well above the national average.

- The gap in performance between pupils who were eligible for free school meals and those who weren't, was narrower than the national gap. This means that Brent children eligible for free school meals made more progress than in other parts of the country.
- The majority of schools in Brent have been judged good or better by Ofsted and the number of schools causing significant concern has continued to reduce.
- The total number of Brent resident pupils excluded from school in and out of the borough was at its lowest (49) for more than ten years.
- In 2011 the gap between achievements of Somali pupils – who have historically underachieved – and all Brent pupils, reduced to ten percentage points compared to 21 percentage points in 2010.

What we still need to focus on:

- School places. We must consider and explore every possible way of ensuring that every child in Brent has an available place in a Brent school.
- Maintaining the close focus on primary schools in order to challenge and support them in securing an outcome of at least 'good' in their next inspection by Ofsted.
- Challenging and supporting schools in narrowing the gaps in attainment between specific groups of pupils and all other pupils, by improving the educational achievement of pupils on free school meals.
- Improving the educational achievements of black Caribbean and Somali pupils in particular, and all Brent pupils.



Access to the very best opportunities in and out of school

Achievements in the last two years:

- By September 2011 97.4 per cent of our 16 and 17-year-olds had been made an offer of a place in learning. This is higher than the national average and the fourth highest in London.
- Fewer young people aged 16-18 were not in education, employment and training.
- More 16-18 year olds from black or minority groups were engaged in education, employment or training at the end of March 2011.
- More children leaving care at 16 have been engaged in education, training or employment throughout the year in 2010/11, with a ten per cent improvement on the previous year.
- There have been less first time entrants to the youth justice system in 2010/11, with a 24 per cent reduction from the previous year.
- More young offenders (85 per cent) known to the youth offending service were engaged in some form of suitable education, training or employment, representing an increase of two per cent from the same period last year.

What we still need to focus on:

- The number of young people (79.3 per cent) with learning difficulties who were engaged in education, employment or training had decreased slightly at end of March 2011.
- Reducing re-offending rates for young offenders. It was 46 per cent in 2010-11, which is much higher than the national average.
- Reducing the number of the young people (7.6 per cent in 2010-11) known to the youth justice system who were sentenced to custody. This is an increase on last year's figure but in line with our statistical neighbours.
- Increase the number of teenage mothers engagement in education, employment or training, as there has been a slight decrease in performance in this area.





Developing strong families to improve outcomes for children

Achievements in the last two years:

- Implemented 17 children's centre buildings across five localities, providing early education and childcare, family support, health services and employability services, including support for parents to access training.
- Parenting support in children's centres is now part of the core offer to families and includes a range of universal and targeted services. These include universal information, advice and guidance, drop-in facilities, structured evidence-based parenting programmes and outreach services and home visiting – giving special attention to those who need extra help with their children. We recognise in Brent that good parenting makes a big difference to a child's wellbeing and future success. Many parents will need help and guidance at some point in their parenting experience.
- Brent's children's centres are now organised on a locality basis. They provide the full core offer of integrated early education and childcare, family support, health provision (including midwifery, breastfeeding and smoking cessation support and advice) and parenting, employability and training support to families with a child under five across the borough.
- Children's centres now also help families to have positive opportunities to contribute and strengthen community relationships. This includes supporting volunteering, enabling parents to contribute to the governance of children's centres and hosting community events.

- A total of 95 families participated in the MEND programme (combating childhood obesity) in 2010-2011, exceeding the annual target of 84.
- In 2010/11 more mothers (six per cent) initiated breastfeeding compared to the previous year.
- There was improvement in the prevalence of breastfeeding at six-eight weeks from birth.
- Less new mothers are smoking during pregnancy.
- There was a decrease in the number of households living in temporary accommodation, during 2010/11 (33 per cent) .
- There has been an increase in the numbers of women who have seen a midwife or a maternity professional for health and social care assessment of needs, risks and choices by 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- There has been improvement in the percentage uptake of immunisations for children at ages one, two and five.

What we still need to focus on:

- Further improving the percentage uptake of immunisations for children aged two and five.
- Encouraging people to take more exercise. Over half our population is not taking part in any form of physical exercise.
- Encouraging families to take-up opportunities for improving their economic wellbeing (including Job Centre Plus advisors working from children's centres, provision of ESOL classes, Citizens Advice Bureau services encouraging take-up of entitlements, support to address housing needs and adult education programmes.)

We recognise in Brent that good parenting makes a big difference to a child's wellbeing and future success

Outcomes for children, young people and families

By taking radical action against our three priority areas identified in PCFB described below:

Priority 1: Ensure children and young people in our borough are healthy and safe.

Priority 2: Narrowing the gap between those children who do well and those who need extra support to thrive, so the aspirations of every Brent child are realised. We must also ensure and there are sufficient school places to meet continuing increase in demand.

Priority 3: To fully integrate services to develop resilient families.

There will be significant impact on some of our most challenging inequalities.

By focusing on a smaller number of key priorities it will help us focus our work for greater impact. Our priorities also fit well with other important issues set out in the Community Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and contribute to delivering Brent's corporate vision, Our Future 2012-2014:

- Brent will be a thriving, vibrant place, where our diverse community lives in an environment that is safe, sustainable and well maintained.
- All our services will enable local people to fulfil their potential and improve their quality of life. Public resources will be used creatively and wisely to produce lasting benefits for our residents and the borough.
- Our commitment to reducing poverty, redressing inequality and preventing exclusion will be at the heart of all our actions.

This plan sets out the three priorities and the nine outcomes agreed by BCP for 2012-15. It also includes the actions we will take to deliver these outcomes and identifies how we will know if we've been successful. Action plans and outcomes will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Priority 1: Ensure children and young people in our borough are healthy and safe.

Safeguarding is a top priority and we need to ensure our children and young people are healthy, safe and protected from harm, abuse and neglect. Through early intervention, making a healthy start and by providing effective support

for children and families, we will reduce the number of children coming into care, children becoming subject of a child protection plan and improve outcomes for children with disabilities.

Outcome 1: Children and young people in our borough are safe and protected from harm and neglect.

The majority of children and young people in Brent are safe, however Brent has 2,100 children in need, including 386 (2011) children in care and 258(2011) children subject of a child protection plan. As well as this, Brent had more domestic violence offences than the London average and statistical neighbours. Children and young people need to grow up in safe homes with people who care for them if they are to enjoy their childhood and grow up to be happy, healthy adults. Key issues in Brent that require continued focus include: domestic violence and the impact this has on the safety and wellbeing of children within those families; substance misuse and the impact this has on the wellbeing of unborn children; the need for more effective joint working and early intervention.

Outcome 2: Young people enjoy a safe environment, free of crime and anti social behaviour both inside and out of school.

The last Tell Us survey showed that experiences of bullying had become less but the proportion of young people in school year ten who had taken part in any group activity led by an adult outside school lessons (such as sports, arts, or a youth group) had gone down. The re-offending rates of young offenders increased to 46 per cent (2010-11), which is higher than the national average. There has been an increase in young people within the youth justice

system receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody. A safe environment free from bullying and a climate of good behaviour to support learning both in, and out of, school is important. Children and young people need to be equipped with the necessary tools and education to enable them to remain safe online. The partnership approach to youth crime and anti social behaviour is working, but there is more to do to reduce it through targeted intervention, for example we provide integrated support to young people especially around guns and knives.

Outcome 3: Babies, children, young people and families make a healthy start and make healthy choices.

Childhood obesity is a particular cause for concern and represents a future burden of chronic ill health and premature death. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes in Brent, is also high compared to the national average. Harlesden, Willesden and Wembley have more than 20 per cent of children who are obese. Tooth decay is also highly prevalent in Brent. The percentage of decayed teeth in five-year-olds is 15 per cent higher than the national average. Brent had the seventh highest percentage of low birth weight babies of all the London boroughs. Using children's centres as a multidisciplinary model, we have made strong progress in Brent and implemented 17 children's centre buildings which are organised on a locality basis. These deliver and promote programmes which support families, as well as providing the full core offer of integrated early education and childcare, health provision (including midwifery, breastfeeding and smoking cessation support, healthy eating and advice) parenting, employability and training support to

families with a child under five across the borough. We need to continue to further improve accessibility to these services and to continue to have a strong focus on the health of our looked after children. We will do this by ensuring that all our looked after young people have a health assessment when they should so that any problems or issues they may face can be addressed and prevented from escalating.

We do know that looked after children can be particularly vulnerable, with an estimated 45 per cent aged between five and 17 years nationally having mental health problems. It is estimated that young people involved in the criminal justice system are also more likely to have mental health needs. We have a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in place, but want to continue to develop earlier intervention and support for children and young people in this area. We also need to continue to develop our services to meet the needs of those groups we know are particularly vulnerable to emotional and mental health difficulties.

Priority 2 : Closing the gap between those children who do well and those who need extra support to thrive, so the aspirations of every Brent child are realised. We must also ensure there are sufficient school places to meet continuing increase in demand.

It is a priority to address the increasing demand in the borough for school places. We will consider all possible strategies and initiatives to increase the supply of school places. Improving the

educational attainment of all children and young people, including looked after children, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and children from black and ethnic minorities, by focusing on reducing inequality and closing the gap between those who do well and those who may need some extra support to thrive, to enable successful progression into adult life and employability

Outcome 4: Children and young people enjoy their education and achieve the best results they can.

We will raise educational standards at all key stages and close attainment gaps between groups and ensure sufficient school places for every Brent child.

Outcome 5: Enable vulnerable children and young people (including looked after children, those with SEN or a disability) to thrive and realise their aspiration.

Children and young people who are looked after or have disabilities have less opportunity to participate and there should be focus on developing participation in life-long learning. Improving the life chances of young people is a corporate objective and priority for Brent. A long-term priority is addressing the participation of young people in both training and the labour market. Brent Council's Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Strategy highlights our approach to tackling the NEET issue in Brent, in supporting young people into education, employment and training.

Outcome 6: Young people have the skills they need to achieve economic wellbeing in adulthood.

In common with the rest of the country, the claimant count in Brent increased rapidly as a result of the

recession, particularly amongst young people. 2,045 young people aged 18-24 were signing on for job seekers allowance in January 2012, compared to 1,700 in January 2011, up by 345 in one year. It is important that young people can compete in a difficult labour market and have the confidence to succeed. We know that some young people are less likely to be in education or training than others, so we need to make sure they get the support they need. English language, poor health, insufficient skills and childcare costs are the biggest barriers to employment. We are making sure that young people with learning difficulties/disabilities are supported in their transitions to further education, but we need to continue to focus on this.

Priority 3 : To fully integrate services to develop resilient families.

Brent's partnership makes a commitment to deliver integrated services that are designed to identify need early and provide targeted support and protection when families need extra help. In addition to this, we need to make sure that universal services are in place for all children, young people and families. To help children get a healthy start in life and improve emotional health and wellbeing, to tackle child poverty and support children and young people to take part in positive activities as well as up skilling parents to get back into work.

We welcome Graham Allen and Frank Field's recommendations that people, especially parents, health professionals and newly pregnant women should be aware of the importance of developing social and emotional capability in the first years of life, and understand the

best ways of encouraging good outcomes for their children. We will focus on foundation years to reduce gaps in school readiness at age five between children from different social and economic backgrounds. The Brent Parenting Strategy explicitly states that additional support will be given to 'parents, carers and families to ensure all children and young people are able to reach their full potential and to offer early preventative support to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable.' In order for children and young people to get the best start in life, we need to ensure universal settings in early years, nursery, primary and secondary schools are rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

Outcome 8: Children, young people and families live free from poverty.

Child poverty can arise from a combination of issues – parents on low incomes, parental financial capability and debt, unemployment and barriers to employment, poor overcrowded housing, health inequalities and troubled families. We need to work in partnership with all agencies to alleviate the impact of child poverty by appropriate targeting of resources.

Our ultimate goal is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to grow and thrive regardless of socio-economic background. We know, for example, that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have poorer health, and lower educational achievement. Children living in temporary accommodation with high levels of unemployment have worse health, wellbeing and life chances. We also know that poverty rates are highest for workless families. We will focus and concentrate on families who are both in and out of work who are experiencing poverty and those that will be affected by benefit cuts and welfare reforms.

Outcome 9: Developing strong families to improve outcomes for children.

Most families are safe, healthy and resilient, however we need to improve the outcomes for children and young people growing up in families facing multiple problems. Children growing up in families facing multiple problems are more likely to experience poor outcomes. Around two per cent of families (around 140,000 families) in Britain are subject to multiple problems such as:

- no parent in the family in work
- family lives in poor-quality or overcrowded housing
- no parent has any qualifications
- mental health problems
- at least one parent has a long-standing limiting illness, disability or infirmity
- family has low income (below 60 per cent of the average income) and cannot afford certain food and clothing.

Families experiencing five or more of the above points can find it difficult to overcome the issues they face without some kind of intervention or support. Over the next year Brent will identify the families with complex needs and work closely cross departmentally and with key partners to offer support where needed. This offers the potential of targeting support to families in ways that build their resilience, life chances and independence in advance of problems escalating. This is consistent with Brent's commitment to more effectively intervene with families at risk at an earlier stage and so prevent them requiring more specialist and costly services in the future.



Ensure children
and young people
in our borough are
healthy and safe.



How the outcomes have been decided

The process of developing this plan and identifying key priorities and outcomes has involved:

- Reviewing the previous priorities set out in the 2009-11 plan, updating where we have done well and looking at the areas on which we still need to focus. We have reviewed the profile of children and families in Brent along with the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis and the Child Poverty Needs Assessment, as well as looking at what has improved in the borough and emerging issues.
- Consultation and participation activities with children, young people, parents/carers, schools and residents, children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after children. We have also drawn on findings from the Tell Us annual survey, which gets children and young people's views on a wide range of issues.
- Reviewing priorities from the various Brent partnership strategies.

The challenges we face

There are improvements in many areas in terms of the priorities which were set out in the 2009-11 plan, but there are still areas for improvement which the partnership needs to focus on.

- The Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection Report, published in November 2011, stated that the overall effectiveness of the council and its partners in safeguarding children and young people has improved in terms of service provision. But there are some major areas of improvement highlighted in the inspection reports, which are contained in our post inspection action plan.
- In addition to this, a key focus of the Safeguarding and Care Planning Service is to actively seek the views of children, young people and their parents and to incorporate them into service development and improvement.
- There are issues to be addressed in relation to the changing population of Brent, in particular the steady increase in 0 to 19-year-olds. This will have an impact on services for children and young people in the borough. As in other London boroughs, an increasing birth rate is putting pressure on places in pre-school settings, schools, and other support services. The local authority has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places and that there is a coherent strategy in place for dealing with the additional demand for both primary and secondary school places. This will require strong collaborative working between the local authority, schools, parents and local communities.

Services are commissioned by the council and its partners, which contribute to improving outcomes for children and young people aged 0-18 (and in some instances up to age 25), as well as their parents and primary carers. Services cover universal and specialist needs across the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors. More effective and efficient commissioning of services, based on need, is therefore a key priority and One Council projects centred on the reorganisation within the special educational needs services are targeted to address these areas. In addition to this, the commissioning of placements is improving, with efficiencies being achieved through more effective contracting and collaboration with neighbouring authorities through the West London Alliance. The number of looked after children placed within the borough is increasing, and the number of approved Brent foster carers has grown in-line with targets. But further work is still required to ensure that a sufficient range of placements is available within a reasonable distance of Brent.



Addressing the challenges:

The public sector faces an unprecedented reduction in the level of Government funding for local services over the next four years. With demand for many services increasing, and the population in urban areas such as Brent expanding, we will be faced with some hard choices. It is now that we need to be most innovative, ambitious and creative to turn this challenge into an opportunity to reinvent how we deliver public services in the future. In Brent we need to make sure that universal services are in place for all children, young people and their families, to prevent problems from escalating. This can be achieved by ensuring that our services focus on priorities such as helping children to get a healthy start in life, improving emotional health and wellbeing, tackling child poverty and supporting children and young people to take part in positive activities.

Our One Council programme has been carefully designed to target reductions in the operating costs of the council so that we can deliver efficiency savings while minimising the impact on front-line services.

Within this programme there are key projects identified to address fundamental change in our Children's Social Care, Achievement and Inclusion and Partnership projects around prevention. Our projects will enable us to provide better services, increase our performance and reduce costs. By implementing our One Council programme we will be better placed to protect the vital children and families services that many people depend on.

In an increasingly challenging financial climate, it is particularly important to make sure we are using our resources effectively across the partnership to achieve the best outcome for our children and families. As part of our approach to efficiency, we will work with our service users and all partners, to identify how we can collectively make best use of all public finance in Brent.

Public health

Changes at a local level will transfer responsibility for public health to local authorities. This will be exercised through local health and wellbeing boards. Public health responsibilities are to be funded by a ring-fenced budget, to be allocated based on relative health inequalities and deprivation. Shadow arrangements will be put in place from April 2012, with full responsibilities being formally handed over in April 2013.

Changes within health commissioning. Changes from Primary Care Trust (PCT) commissioning to clinical commissioning groups (CCG) means that from April 2012 groups of GPs will be responsible for designing local health services in England. They will do this by commissioning or buying health and care services including:

- elective hospital care
- rehabilitation care
- urgent and emergency care
- most community health services
- mental health and learning disability services.

This is part of the Government's desire to create a clinically driven commissioning system that is more sensitive to the needs of patients.

Healthy Child Programme

The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) (Nov 2009, revised 2010), sets out the recommended framework of universal and progressive services needed to promote optimal health and development for early life stages and family wellbeing. The HCP identifies families in need of additional support and children who are at risk of poor outcomes. It also outlines the roles and responsibilities of commissioners, health, education, local authority and other partners to encourage the development of high-quality services. The Government consequently published the Health Visitors Implementation Plan: A Call to Action (February 2011) setting out the Government's ambitious new plans to expand and rejuvenate the health visiting service. In December 2011, A Call to Action – One Year On, Progress Report was published highlighting progress in key areas of the programme.

The health visiting service and health visiting workforce establishment has developed over time in response to local needs, additional investments and different models of service delivery. NHS Brent commissions health visiting services from Ealing Integrated care Organisation (ICO), in order to deliver the 0-5 HCP and safeguarding services. Despite the additional nurses in training it remains difficult to recruit and retain qualified health visitors, particularly in London.

Children with Special Educational Needs (Phase 2) – One Council project

Brent's population of school age children is projected to rise by 12.9 per cent by 2020. This will significantly affect the demand for SEN provision in mainstream and special schools. The incidence of children and young people with autism has risen sharply. In 2006, 149 children were identified as being on the autistic spectrum. By 2010, this had risen to 273. More young children with multiple and complex special educational needs are being identified.

The implication of this rise in demand is that there are currently insufficient numbers of specialist places in Brent schools. Just over 250 children are placed in out-of-borough special schools. Current planning assumptions are that Brent will need to increase capacity for specialist placements, either in special schools or additionally resourced mainstream schools by at least 30 per cent over the next ten years, in order to meet increasing demands and reduce out-of-borough non-maintained placements and associated costs. The proposed aim of the One Council project is to:

- increase in-borough SEN provision for children with high level needs by approximately 50 places within the project period (Sept 2013). Brent's Children and Families department has a goal to create 200 additional SEN places by 2020.
- reduce expenditure on out-of-borough placements and associated transport costs.

- ensure high-quality, cost-effective local provision and improve on the good outcomes already achieved by children with SEN in Brent.
- increase inclusion of children with high level SEN into mainstream schools through expansion of specialist mainstream provision and co-location, where possible, of special schools and mainstream schools.
- improve the commissioning of all out-of-borough school placements.

Working With Families – One Council projects

Brent Council, with its partner agencies, is seeking to improve the lives of some of the borough's most vulnerable families through an integrated whole systems approach to early intervention. The approach will be family focused, draw on appropriate skills and experience from across the council and will require effective collaboration with a range of key partner agencies.

The challenge for Brent is to establish a robust blueprint for early intervention services that is tailored to local needs and circumstances while, at the same time, ensuring that Brent can obtain the benefits of responding pro-actively to central Government initiatives. The council has already begun to meet this challenge in the way it is planning to deliver services to families with young children through the Payment by Results (PbR) children's centre pilot. The next step is to develop robust early intervention strategies for vulnerable families with children across all age groups.



To do this, Brent with its partners intends to establish a suite of projects that will implement an effective working with families strategy. The core principles that underpin this strategy, is to support families where there are children and young people in need, in order for them to enjoy a good quality of life and develop as confidently and responsibly as possible by:

- helping to improve the educational outcomes of children in families in need with a particular focus on improving school attendance
- promoting the positive wellbeing of families including physical health, emotional wellbeing and mental health while recognising being in long term employment can have a positive impact on all of these factors
- acting as an advocate for families rights and their inclusion and active involvement in their communities
- focusing particular support on those families where the children's or young people's life chances are the poorest so that they can grow up in supportive and stimulating home environments.

The high level project approach that will be taken in order to deliver the strategy and improve the lives of the borough's most vulnerable families is broken down into four key projects :

Multi-Agency Front Door project

This project will implement arrangements to create a 'multi-agency front door' arrangement for Brent. This will enable robust identification and assessment of vulnerable families in the borough to ensure that they receive the services they require. Also included as part of this project, will be to explore how the common assessment framework (CAF) process can be used to identify vulnerable families.

Troubled Families – mapping of vulnerable families

A vulnerable families mapping and identification pilot has been set up. The Early Years Integrated Service (EYIS) is leading a multi-agency pilot that will develop criteria to assist in identifying families at greater risk of poor outcomes. This leverages the experience of nine local authorities in England and Wales and is part of Brent's approach to piloting the PbR initiative within children's centres. This tests innovative partnership working and the integration of a renewed common assessment that will identify families who will benefit from early intervention. In several local authorities, evidence-based criteria have been used to apply thresholds for automatic access to early intervention services. This shows that children growing up in families facing multiple problems are more likely to experience poor outcomes.

The Early Help (Early Years) project

This project will be the completion and extension of the work that is already in place as part of the PbR children's centre pilot (described below), to provide early help to families with children aged between 0 and ten years. The project will establish a team of key workers to provide support to families with young children, to reduce the likelihood of them requiring additional services at a later stage.

Payment by Results pilot (PbR)

Payment by results (PbR) is part of the Government's approach to developing open public services which devolves responsibility to the lowest level to meet local needs, are transparent and accountable and achieve value for money. In Brent this is being delivered through children's centres with the objective of reducing inequalities in child development, school readiness, health and life chances, and to improve parenting aspiration and skills. Brent is a pilot authority in this trial, the results of which will enable the Government to make a decision about the potential rollout of a national scheme. The trial offers an opportunity to find out what works for these families. Brent and other pilot authorities are currently working with the Government to identify the trial measures at local level in collaboration with our health partners.

The Early Help (Adolescents) project

A new project, to be established, that will focus solely on providing targeted and effective services to families with children aged 11-16 plus to meet their needs and prevent further escalation. The project will recruit and establish key worker teams to deal with challenging teenage behaviour and link in closely with the Early Help (Early Years) project to ensure a smooth transition where necessary.

Edge of Care project

This project to implement a robust 'edge of care' service for families with children at all ages, at stage 4 level of need. The approach will be to divert children from the care system and reduce reliance on statutory services. This project is intended to reduce pressure on the locality teams and reduce the placement budget.

Fundamental Review of Services to Young People – One Council project

The project focuses on how we transform youth services and develop new approaches to deliver improved and positive outcomes for young people, including statutory youth provision. Its purpose is to reduce the number of young people that are not in education, employment or training (NEET) as well involving local engagement in the commissioning and delivery of services and developing alternative funding approaches to maintain service in times of financial challenge. The project is currently in a start-up phase and is looking to analyse the both the current and future needs of young people and the future needs of young people in Brent. It will also consider the new Government guidance on duty of youth provision.

Transition to Adult Life – One Council project

The Transitions to Adult Life One Council project is set to improve the transition of children with disabilities into adult services. The purpose of this project is to provide better transitional care for children with disabilities. In addition to this, put in place a better system to support the families of children with disabilities. The 0-13 Children with Disabilities project originated as a separate work stream within the Transitions One Council project.

0-13 Children with Disabilities One Council project

This project will improve services for children with disabilities aged between 0-13 and their families. It runs in parallel with the work of the One Council Transitions into Adult Life project. The 0-13 project will deliver similar improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery for children in the younger age group, and ensure a smooth handover to the transitions team at age 14 for all relevant children.

Enhanced partnership dialogue to best meet the needs of children and their families will also be a feature of this project.

Domestic Violence: Violence Against Women and Girls project

This forms one work stream of the Partners for Brent agenda and has been set up to address a raft of new legislation impacting on this area. The focus of the work is to prevent violence from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours that foster it. Where possible, there will be early intervention and, where violence does occur, adequate partnership support to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families. Violence Against Women and Girls includes, but is not limited to, female genital mutilation, prostitution, human trafficking, stalking, sexual violence, forced marriage, honour-based violence and domestic homicide reviews.

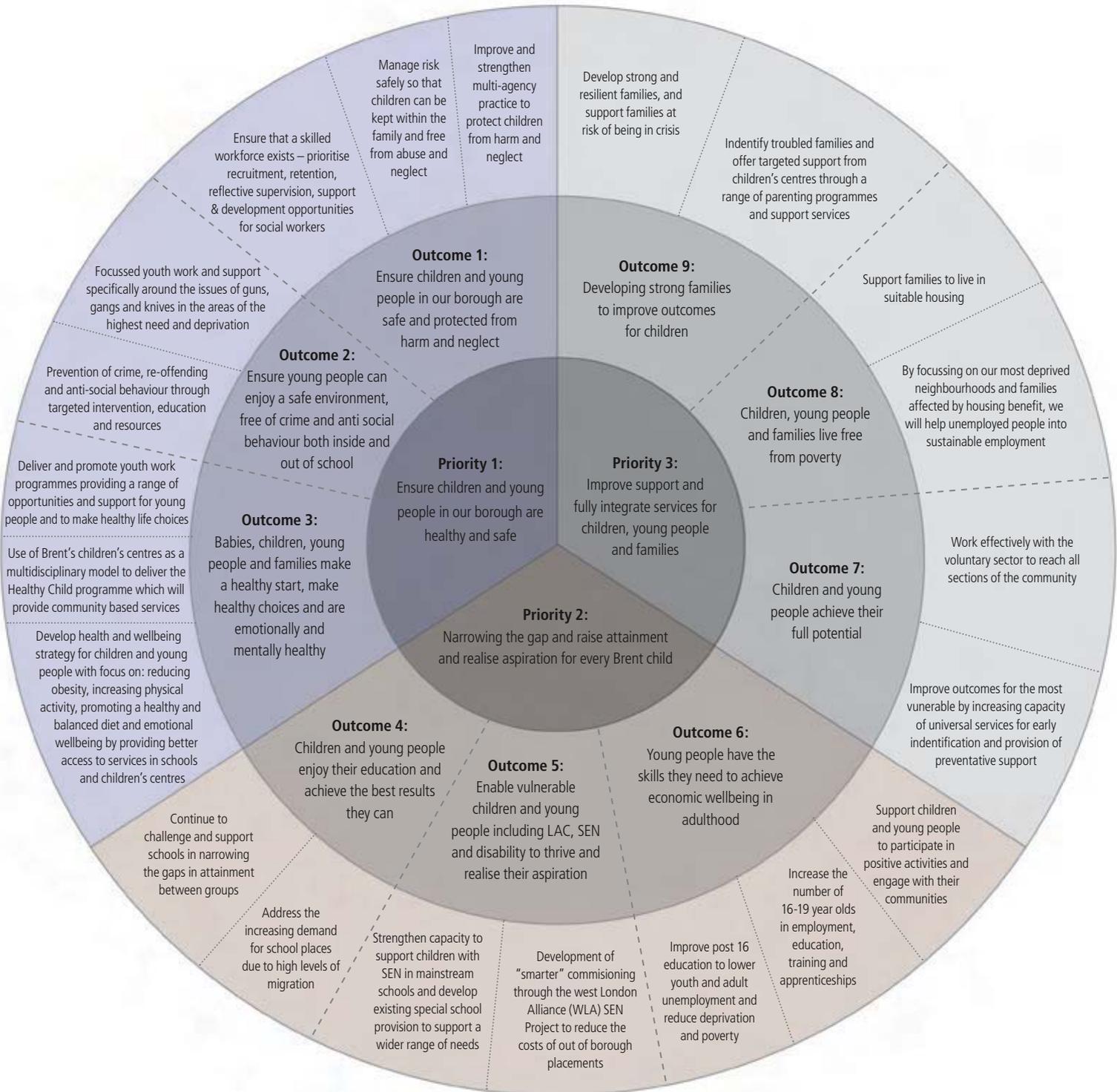
⁷ Department of health (2009, revised 2010). Healthy Child Programme, (HCP) pregnancy and the first five years of life http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_107563



it is particularly important to make sure we are using our resources effectively across the partnership to achieve the best outcome for our children and families



Diagrammatic representation of the key priorities, outcomes and related actions for the Plan for Children and Families in Brent 2012 -15



PCFB Action Plan

Brent Children's Partnership has a robust action plan.

The actions relating to each outcome are identified in the plan PCFB action plan below and provide the framework for ensuring that progress is made. The actions relate to a performance management framework that is based on a number of national performance indicators, together with locally developed indicators and key

milestones, for completion of actions. This includes the measures relating to children's services that are included in Brent's Performance Improvement Plan and in Brent NHS agreement. Over the next three years, this will be used to support delivery of the outcomes and actions identified in this plan and will be reviewed at Brent Partnership meetings.

Priority 1: Ensure children and young people in our borough are healthy and safe.

Outcome	Action – What are we going to do?	Timescale	Lead, lead department and partners	Link to other strategies/plans/projects
1. Children and families in our borough are safe and protected from harm and neglect	• Ensure that a skilled workforce exists – prioritise recruitment, retention, reflective supervision, support and development opportunities for social workers	2012-2015	Children's Social Care	Post Inspection plan
	• Manage risk safely so that children can be kept within the family and free from abuse and neglect	2012-2013	Head of Safeguarding	LSCB Business Plan
	• Improve and strengthen multi-agency practice to protect children from harm and neglect	2012-2014	Head of Safeguarding	LSCB Business Plan
2. Young people enjoy a safe environment, free of crime and anti social behaviour both inside and outside of school	• Focused youth work and support specifically around issues of guns, gangs and knives in the areas of the highest need and deprivation.	2013	Youth and Connexions	NEET partnership Strategy, YOS Plan; Crime Prevention Strategy
	• Prevention of crime, re-offending and anti-social behaviour through targeted intervention, education and resources.	2012-2014	Youth and Connexions and YOS	NEET partnership strategy, YOS Plan
3. Babies, children, young people and families make a healthy start ,make healthy choices and are emotionally and mentally healthy	• Deliver and promote youth work programmes provide a range of opportunities and support for young people to make healthy life choices.	2012-2014	Youth and Connexions	Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Youth and Connexions
	• Use of Brent's children's centres as a multidisciplinary model to deliver the Healthy Child Programme will which provide community based services.	2012-2014	Early help and education	Parenting Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy
	• Develop a health and wellbeing strategy for children and young people with a focus on: reducing obesity, increasing physical activity, promoting a healthy and balanced diet and emotional wellbeing by providing better access to services in schools and children's centres	2012-2015	NHS Brent to March 13 and CCG from April 13.	Health and Wellbeing Strategy

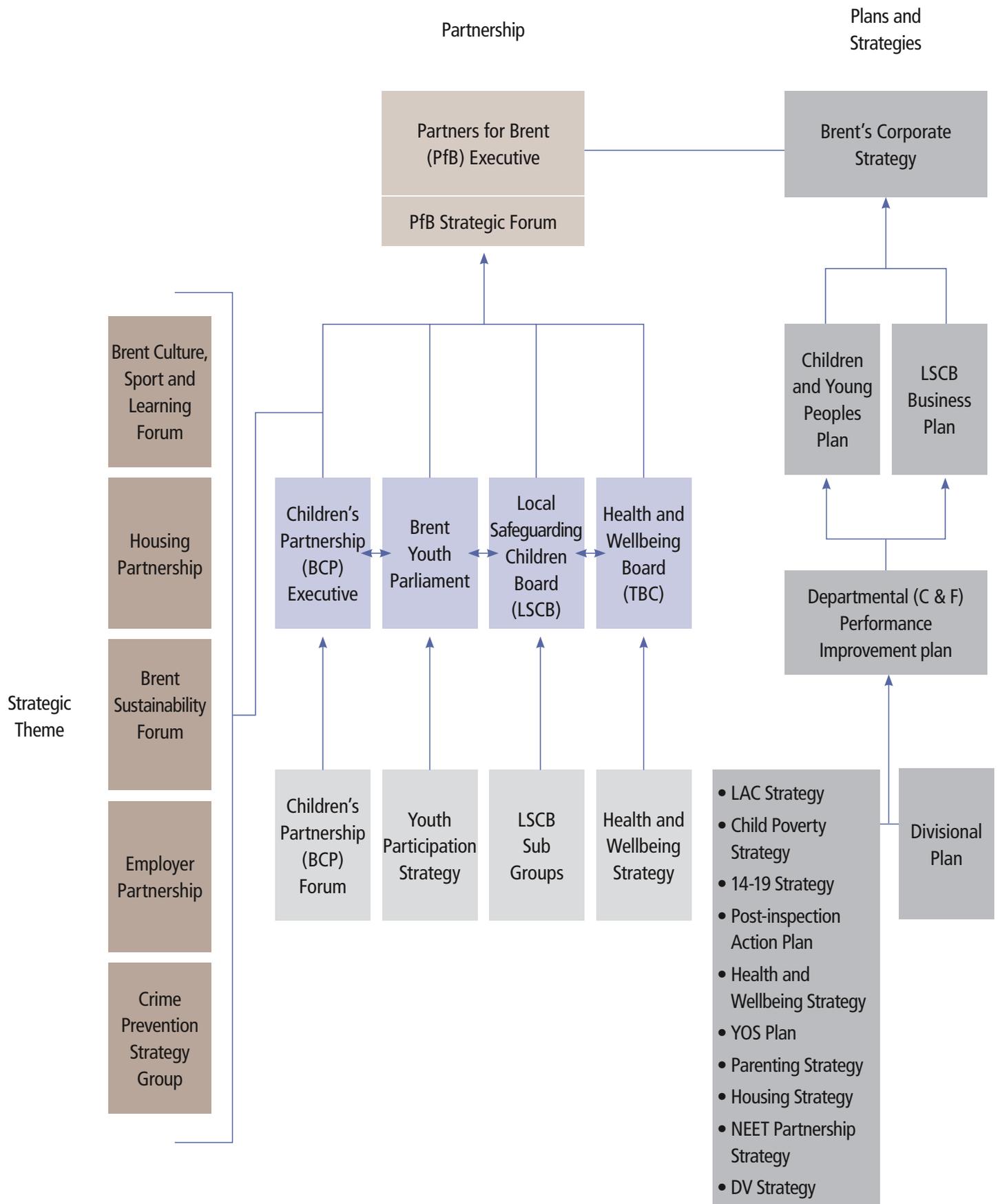
Priority 2: Narrowing the gap between those children who do well and those who need extra support to thrive, so the aspirations of every Brent child are realised. We must also ensure there are sufficient school places to meet continuing increase in demand.

Outcome	Action – What are we going to do?	Timescale	Lead, lead department	Link to other strategies/ plans/projects
4. Children and young people enjoy their education and achieve the best results they can.	• Continue to challenge and support schools in narrowing the gaps in attainment between specific groups of pupil and all other pupils.	2014	School Improvement Service, schools	BCP, Children and Families DMT
	• Address the increasing demand for school places due to high levels of migration.	2014		
5. Enabling vulnerable children and young people including LAC, SEN and disability to thrive and realise their aspiration.	• Strengthen capacity to support children with SEN in mainstream schools and develop existing special school provision to support a wider range of needs, better transitional care for children with disabilities.	2014	SEN Phase2 project, BCP, Children and Families DMT	SEN and Disability (Transitions and 0-13 One Council projects), Looked After Children Strategy, Youth and Connexions
	• Development of smarter commissioning through the West London Alliance (WLA) SEN Project to reduce the cost of out of borough placements.	2014	SEN Phase2 project	SEN Phase2 project and Disability (Transitions and 0-13 One Council projects)
6. Young people have the skills they need to achieve economic wellbeing in adulthood.	• Improve post 16 education that will result in lower youth and adult unemployment and therefore impact on reducing deprivation and poverty.	2011-2014	Youth and Connexions	NEET Partnership Strategy and 14-19 Strategy, Child Poverty Strategy
	• Increase the number of 16 -19 year olds going into employment, education, training and apprenticeships.	2011-2014		
	• Support children and young people to participate in positive activities and engage with their communities.	2009-2011	Brent Youth Parliament	Youth Participation Strategy

Priority 3: To fully integrate services to develop resilient families.

Outcome	Action – What are we going to do?	Timescale	Lead, lead department and partners	Link to other strategies/ plans/projects
7. Children and young people achieve their full potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve outcomes for the most vulnerable by increasing capacity of universal services for early identification and provision of preventative support. 	2012–2014	Early help and education	Parenting Strategy; Multi Agency Family Intervention Project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower communities to ensure a child and family focused approach. 	2012–2014	Early help and education	
8. Children, young people and families live free from poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By focusing on our most deprived neighbourhoods and families affected by housing benefit, we will help unemployed people into sustainable employment. 	2012–2014	Children and Families, Regeneration and Major Projects including lead partners JCP and CNWL and NHS	Child Poverty Strategy, Employer Partnership, Housing strategy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and support Brent’s unemployed social housing tenants and those in temporary accommodation to help them overcome barriers to employment and reduce dependency on benefits. 	2012–2015	Children and Families, Regeneration and Major Projects, including lead partners JCP	Regeneration Strategy
9. Developing strong families to improve outcomes for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify troubled families and offer targeted support from children’s centres through a range of parenting programmes and support services. 	2012–2015	Children and Families, SP&I and Regeneration and Major Projects	Parenting strategy, Working with families Project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support interventions and services for families accessing multiple services across the council and partners 	2012–2015	BCP	Working with families Project.

Appendix A: Brent's Partnership Arrangements



Appendix B: PCFB priorities and links to other strategies and priorities

	Priority 1: Ensure children and young people in our borough are healthy and safe.	Priority 2: Narrowing the gap between those children who do well and those who need extra support to thrive,	Priority 3: To fully integrate services to develop resilient families.
Corporate Strategy	One Borough: Thriving, sustainable and safe	One Community: Fulfill potential and Improve quality of life	One Council: Reduce poverty and inequality and improve services
Corporate Plan Improvement Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing worklessness and low incomes • Supporting children and families • Enabling young people to thrive • Reducing crime and fear of crime • Driving economic opportunity and regeneration • Protecting our environment • Consistent engagement with local communities • Achieving organisational efficiency • Service improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing worklessness and low incomes • Supporting children and families • Enabling young people to thrive • Reducing crime and fear of crime • Addressing health inequalities and gap in life expectancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing worklessness and low incomes • Supporting children and families • Addressing health inequalities and gap in life expectancy • Consistent engagement with local communities • Achieving organisational efficiency • Service improvement • Driving economic opportunity and regeneration • Greater access to affordable housing • Increasing sports and leisure facility
A Plan for Children and Families in Brent, outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and young people in our borough are safe and protected from harm and neglect 2. Young people enjoy a safe environment, free of crime and anti social behaviour both inside and out of school. 3. Babies, children, young people and families make a healthy start, make healthy choices and are emotionally and mentally healthy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Children and young people enjoy their education and achieve the best results they can. 6. Enable vulnerable children and young people including LAC, SEN and those with a disability to thrive and realise their aspiration. 7. Young people have the skills they need to achieve economic wellbeing in adulthood 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Children and young people achieve their full potential 9. Children, young people and families live free from poverty 10. Developing strong families to improve outcomes for children
Brent's Child Poverty Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting troubled families • Reduce domestic violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce poverty levels in low income households • Reduction in NEET group • Improve financial capacity of parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce poverty – low income households • Supporting troubled families • Improve financial capacity of Parents • Reduction in fuel poverty • Improve health and wellbeing with focus on obesity and mental health
Brent's Health and Wellbeing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping vulnerable children and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving every child the best start in life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering communities to take better care of themselves • Improving mental wellbeing throughout the life course

Appendix C: Other strategies that link to the PCFB

Brent Child Poverty Strategy

This strategy aims to take forward the priorities raised in our needs assessment. It also provides a framework for partners to work collaboratively towards a common goal of reducing child poverty by 'breaking the cycle of deprivation'. The strategy will also encourage new and innovative ways of working to address some of the challenges.

A strategy alone can achieve nothing without the full and explicit commitment of all key partners and communities, with who the local authority will co-operate in order to achieve our objectives. Setting out a shared vision and commitment with a clear rationale for tackling poverty is the purpose of this document. The fundamental purpose of a strategy is to ensure that all council services and local partners are working in a consistent way to do everything possible to reduce child poverty in the borough and ensure that we break the cycle of poverty that exists in our poorest neighbourhoods, but also prevent deprivation from spreading into other areas.

The key priorities and outcomes identified in the Child Poverty Strategy are to:

- reduce poverty levels of children living in low income households
- support troubled families
- reduce those in the NEET group
- improve financial capacity of parents
- reduce those in fuel poverty
- reduce domestic violence rates
- improve the health and wellbeing of children with a focus on reducing obesity, tooth decay and poor mental health.

Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) business plan

Brent Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) is currently developing a new business plan which covers the period 2012-15. It is informed by national and local agenda's as well as key priorities that were identified at the LSCB business planning day on 23 May 2012.

The Munro report discusses the importance of senior leaders working together through the LSCB to provide local leadership for how agencies work together, however with the changing landscape of provision membership of the board will need to be revised. It is acknowledged that the Government response to Dr Eileen Munro's Review of Child Protection is likely to impact on the role of LSCBs and this plan will be reviewed accordingly.

Youth participation strategy for Brent

The council established Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) in March 2007 to give children and young people a genuine voice in the affairs of the borough, and to implement the council's obligations under the Children Act 2004. BYP provides ten to 19-year-olds with a safe space discuss the issues that are important to them and enables them to have a say in decisions about services that have an impact on them.

Elections were held in October 2011 to elect new members of youth parliament (MYPs) for the year 2011-2012.

There are 72 seats on BYP. These are comprised of representatives aged 10 to 19 from local schools, youth groups and targeted groups such as young people with disabilities, young people in care, young people who go to special schools and young people with refugee status.

NEET Partnership Strategy and 14-19 Strategy

Reducing the number of young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) remains a key priority for Brent. This is a multi-agency partnership strategy that ensures information sharing and collaborative working to improve outcomes for children and young people who are likely to be NEET. This is done through targeted intervention and progression post 16. In addition to this the Youth and Connexions service offer a range of universal and targeted services appropriate to the needs of looked after children as well as other young people. In addition to the universal information, advice and guidance service, Connexions currently

also provides a more specialist service for those looked after young people who may require more sustained support in order to engage with their education, employment or training. A drop-in youth club for looked after young people runs on a weekly basis, and young people in care may also access the full range of projects and activities provided by the Youth and Connexions Services, including the summer university programme.

The NEET Strategy links to the 14-19 Strategy and implementation plan and the 14-19 Agenda. The 14-19 Agenda states 'local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in their area.' Young people are those who are over compulsory school age but under 19, or are aged 19 to 25 and subject to a learning difficulty assessment. Local authorities also have a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training for young people subject to youth detention. In deciding whether education or training is suitable, the local authority must have regard to, amongst other things, the quality of the education and training and may challenge where this is poor or inadequate. Brent is working with partners to shape provision in this area by identifying gaps, enabling new provision and developing the market to establish pre and post 16 provision and to establish a network for providers offering apprenticeships.

Brent Parenting Strategy

The basis of the parenting strategy is to ensure all parents have access to a core offer of 'information, transparency, assessment, participation and feedback based on universal, targeted and specialist provision'. The principles underpinning this strategy are based on offering support to vulnerable children and adults within the same family. The strategy acknowledges that identifying children and families requiring parenting support is a mainstream activity that is a fundamental aspect of core service delivery rather than an additional responsibility. Therefore services that have been identified within the strategy need to assume the parenting support responsibilities outlined and ensure that the holistic needs of children and families are met to achieve sustainable improvements. Services will address and acknowledge the complexity and importance of the parenting role for the different stages in a child's or young person's life and support will empower and develop parents' and families' abilities, rather than directing them. In order that we respond to the needs of parents in a meaningful way, it is important that high quality support is offered at different levels and at different stages, enabling parents to access support, feel confident and competent about their parenting abilities.

Brent Youth Offending Plan

The purpose of the plan is to provide services, support and strategic advice to families that will help to prevent further offending, by children and young people aged 8-17. The service promotes positive social behaviour, and ensures that children and young people who have offended are given the opportunity to become responsible and active citizens. Partnership working is a key element of this plan as well as early intervention and crime reduction activities, to reduce offending.

Brent Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2011-2014

Brent has high ambitions for children in care and care-leavers. The strategy was agreed following consultation with children and young people who are both looked after and care-leavers. It reflects statutory guidance and good practice, and as well as providing an overall vision, will also directly link into individual case planning. The Brent Strategy for Looked After Children and Care-Leavers 2011-2014 action plan provides further detail of the execution of this strategy.



Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2015

The aim of this strategy is to achieve a sustained reduction in the inequalities in health and wellbeing experienced between Brent's most-deprived and least-deprived neighbourhoods so that all residents can live long, fulfilling and healthy lives.

The four key priorities for the health and well being strategy are :-

- Giving every child the best start in life
- Helping vulnerable children and families
- Empowering communities to take better care of themselves
- Improving mental wellbeing throughout the life course

Housing Strategy 2009-2014

Brent's Housing Strategy has an identified priority to tackle homelessness and reduce temporary accommodation by maintaining emphasis on preventative services and exploring opportunities to improve access to appropriate housing solutions. The council also assists in the re-housing of care-leavers at the appropriate time, through direct provision as well as advice and guidance on housing options.

Crime Prevention Strategy 2008-2011

The Crime and Disorder 1998 Act places a duty upon the responsible authorities in each local authority to implement a strategy for reduction in crime, disorder, the misuse of drugs and behaviour damaging to the environment. The main purpose of this strategy is to tackle and reduce violence in all forms. There are three distinct areas of activity that the strategy aims to address: domestic violence, guns, knives and gangs and robbery.

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy incorporating the Cultural Strategy 2010-2015

The strategy requires the many different providers of sport and physical activity to work together in partnership to improve coordination, reduce duplication and maximise resources, to give Brent's communities the greatest opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. The Sports and Physical Activity Strategy will help achieve the vision of Brent's Cultural Strategy to 'develop a range of cultural opportunities that are engaging and accessible'.



