



Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 6.00 pm

Conference Hall - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley, HA9 0FJ

Please note that this will be held as an in person physical meeting which all Committee members will be required to attend in person.

The meeting will be open for the press and public to attend or alternatively can be followed via the live webcast. The link to follow proceedings via the live webcast will be available [HERE](#).

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Ketan Sheth (Chair)
Fraser (Vice-Chair)
Aden
Afzal
Collymore
Ethapemi
Mahmood
Rajan-Seelan
Smith
Lorber
Mistry

Substitute Members

Councillors:

Ahmadi Moghaddam, S Butt, Conneely, Dixon,
Kennelly, Long, Mitchell, Molloy and Shah

Councillors:

Kansagra and Maurice

Councillors:

Georgiou and Matin

Co-opted Members

The Venerable Archdeacon Catherine Pickford, Church of England Diocese Schools
Alloysius Frederick, Roman Catholic Diocese Schools
Sayed Jaffar Milani, Muslim Faith Schools
Rachelle Goldberg, Jewish Faith Schools

Observers

Brent Youth Parliament, Observer
Jenny Cooper, NEU and Special School observer
John Roche, NEU and Secondary School Observer

For further information contact: Hannah O'Brien, Senior Governance Officer
hannah.o'brien@brent.gov.uk

For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit: **www.brent.gov.uk/democracy**

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

- (a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:
 - To which you are appointed by the council;
 - which exercises functions of a public nature;
 - which is directed is to charitable purposes;
 - whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).

- (b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;

a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who is the subject of a registrable personal interest

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members	
2 Declarations of interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.	
3 Deputations (if any)	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
4 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 12
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.	
5 Matters arising (if any)	
6 Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024-25	13 - 22
To present the Committee's work programme for 2024-25.	
7 Overview of SEND provision in Brent	23 - 66
To provide an overview of services for Brent's children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).	
8 Early Years Provision and progress towards meeting the expansion of childcare entitlements	67 - 84
To provide an overview of early years provision in Brent and an update on progress towards meeting the expansion of childcare entitlements.	
9 Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Recommendations Trackers 2023-24 and 2024-25	85 - 98

To present the Scrutiny Recommendations Trackers.

10 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Deputy Director – Democratic Services or her representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 20 November 2024



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Brent

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 30 July 2024 at 6.00 pm

Held as a hybrid meeting in the Conference Hall – Brent Civic Centre

PRESENT: Councillor Ketan Sheth (Chair), Councillor Fraser (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Afzal, Collymore, Ethapemi, Lorber, Molloy, Mistry, Rajan-Seelan and Smith, and co-opted member Ms Rachelle Goldberg

In attendance: Councillor Nerva (online), Councillor Mili Patel, Councillor Grahl, Councillor Ahmadi-Moghaddam

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

- Councillor Aden, substituted by Councillor Molloy
- Councillor Mahmood
- The Venerable Archdeacon Catherine Pickford

2. Declarations of interests

Personal interests were declared as follows:

- Councillor Ethapemi – spouse employed by NHS
- Councillor Rajan-Seelan – spouse employed by NHS
- Councillor Collymore – Patient Voice

Councillor Sheth highlighted that his register of interest could be found on the Brent website.

3. Deputations (if any)

There were no deputations received.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising (if any)

There were no matters arising.

6. Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report April 2023 - March 2024

The Chair welcomed Nicola Brownjohn (Independent Chair, Brent Safeguarding Adults Board) to the meeting, who had been in post since January 2024, and invited her to introduce the report.

Nicola Brownjohn began by highlighting that she had started in post outside of the timescales of the annual report period but hoped to give an overview of the work the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) would be looking to do over the coming reporting period. She explained that her role as independent chair was to provide an external view, completely independent from any partners, to take forward and lead the SAB. Continuing to provide an overview of the arrangements, Nicola highlighted that SABs became statutory in 2014 under the Care Act, and within the remit of SABs was to produce an annual report every year, to set strategic priorities, to undertake Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) and to take forward learning. Her role ensured that the safeguarding system in Brent was established and working well, and part of her role was to challenge the partners working within the SAB. The three strategic partners were the Council, health and police, but there were other agencies involved to support the SAB including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Brent's hospital trusts, Brent's mental health trusts, voluntary services, and other Council departments such as housing. In concluding her introduction, she highlighted the importance of coming together and working collaboratively.

The Chair thanked Nicola Brownjohn for her introduction and invited comments and questions from the Committee, with the following issues raised:

The Committee began by asking what Nicola had found coming into the SAB that she felt worked very well in Brent, and where she felt there needed to be some more focus. She responded that she had been struck by the positive way partners worked together. When she had joined Brent, she had some ideas for changes which had been taken forward quickly, with partners accepting them and adapting to them well. She had found very good listening and meaningful conversations were taking place between partners, and was pleased at the range of agencies involved with SAB and the commitment from those agencies. Her 'wow' factor for Brent's arrangements was the relationship the partners had with voluntary services. One of the SAB strategic priorities was substance misuse and housing, so she had visited Skylight in Harlesden to look at the services on offer there and had been enthused by the depth of knowledge of the staff and the 'built for zero' work being done. In terms of works in progress, she had found when she started there was a gap in terms of understanding the data available. The partnership was very engaged so a subgroup was being launched which would take that work forward, looking at the data and any outlying areas and taking forward areas where there might be further themes to explore.

Noting that the Chair of SAB would have experience from other areas of the country, the Committee asked how Brent compared to other areas she had worked with. Nicola Brownjohn confirmed that she did have experience of other SABs and had also written several SARs over the last 5 years. She felt that Brent was doing relatively well but highlighted there was always a want for continuous improvement and there were things that Brent could improve on. While there were areas for improvement, she had confidence in Brent's processes. Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Community Health and Wellbeing, Brent Council) added that, to support the Board and Nicola coming into the role of Chair, Adult Social Care had commissioned an independent review on how Brent managed safeguarding both in terms of the processes and broad arrangements. The review had been positive in the processes and staff understanding of how to deal with issues and had included

some recommendations as well which had given some reassurance and enabled the Chair to have independent assurance that the processes worked and that staff had a good understanding of safeguarding.

The Chair asked how the Cabinet Member assured themselves that those processes were robust and heard that the Cabinet Member had regular meetings with the director where any issues of concern would be raised. Any urgent issues would be raised immediately through the Chief Executive and Leader.

In response to whether, as Chair, she felt all the agencies were joined up and working together, Nicola Brownjohn highlighted that often one of the reasons for needing a SAR was because agencies had not worked together in some way or had not been robust in working together. Some SARs that had been audited recently had taken place during the pandemic period, so agencies had recognised the learning from those and she would want to know what the change was now compared to when those SARs had taken place. She was now starting to receive that information from agencies who had reflected on that period and questioned when things had not gone right. Over the next year, she would go back to those agencies and back to the multi-agency group to see what the impact of that learning had been, whether any actions implemented had been sustainable, and if there was more that needed to be done.

The Committee noted that the SAB took evidence from 3 sub-groups to fulfil its duties, and asked what other areas the SAB would want to take further evidence from to help strategic decisions. Nicola Brownjohn responded that she was keen to triangulate all available evidence and build a foundation for that. One area that evidence could be taken from and learned from was SARs. Alongside that, there was also an assurance aspect through the information coming from individual agencies. In the annual report, the 3 strategic partners looked at what they were doing in respect of the strategic priorities and learning from SARs and provided that analysis back to the SAB. She was also starting to build on a third strand of evidence which was hearing from those working out in the community and meeting community groups to ensure the right people were being reached.

The Committee noted that the SAB was looking into data and asked whether that would focus on the availability of data or the type of data. Members heard that the review would be around how the Board looked at and used the data. There was a tendency for the SAB to receive a large dataset, so it was important that partners understood what that data was telling. The work would start with Adult Social Care data and dig down further. For example, the sub-group might look at data around referrals and find a certain theme such as location of abuse that could then be analysed and reviewed. That data would then take the SAB in a direction that could be learned from. Claudia Brown provided a practical example. She explained that Adult Social Care took a lead on safeguarding, so a number of agencies would refer to Adult Social Care (ASC) for a response to a safeguarding concern. It was expected that ASC would be getting referrals from all agencies but if the data showed that was not happening then ASC, working with agencies, could create an action plan around safeguarding criteria and dig deeper to see the reasons behind that and improve those relationships with agencies to get more referrals. In terms of how the partnership worked to gather and share that data, Nicola Brownjohn explained that for the annual review the data was from SARs, and those SARs were being shared at all meetings. The new subgroup would mean that agencies could

bring data into that group and if there were any recurring themes that subgroup found then the SAB could look further into that.

In terms of whether the relationship between Housing and Adult Social Care was robust enough to fulfil the Council's duty of care in regards to safeguarding cases, Claudia Brown (Director Adult Social Care, Brent Council) confirmed that there was a relationship there. There was a Joint Housing and Social Care Panel that picked up complex cases from housing and those cases were discussed at the panel with social workers getting involved where necessary. In addition, there was a high-risk panel for very complex cases, such as where the Housing and Social Care Panel might have already tried interventions that had not worked. That was a multi-disciplinary panel with health, social care, mental health representatives, district nurses and many different disciplines to move cases forward. Externally, if there was an issue in a Housing Association for example, Housing would broker that relationship between Social Care and the Housing Association to move that case on and provide support wherever necessary, and those cases in Housing Associations could also be brought to those panels.

The Committee asked how the strategic priorities were agreed. Officers advised that this was done through a range of avenues through looking at the data being presented and any common or recurring themes. The Annual Report strategic priorities had been the same for the past few years, but when partners had reviewed those priorities they had found that self-neglect and substance misuse and housing were still coming up regularly so the partnership decided to maintain those. The SARs also helped to inform priorities and one priority was around embedding the learning that came out of SARs. While the priorities had been reset, the SAB was aiming to be much more definite about what that work would look at, how it would achieve impact, and how the data could be tested. A Performance and Audit Subgroup would be set up to look at individual cases and the data coming out of that group would then go to the SAB. For example, if the Performance and Audit Subgroup found that referrals for self-neglect had reduced then the SAB would ask partners why that might be the case. The self-neglect toolkit had launched some time ago so the Performance and Audit Group would begin with auditing around that.

The Committee asked partners what more could be done by each partner so that the collective partnership was delivering better for adults in Brent. They heard that all partners were each attending the subgroups required of and expected of them, and it was hoped they could do more of that and take areas within those groups forward. Also in terms of escalation, checking what their organisations knew about escalation, whether they were aware of the high risk panel and how referrals to the panel could be made, and that partners were moving things forward. Sue Sheldon (Assistant Director for Safeguarding Adults and Children, NHS NWL) felt the partnership was working very well but one thing health could improve on was to share more meaningful data with SAB and share that data in more effective ways. Andrew Brien (Detective Superintendent, NW BCU – Metropolitan Police) highlighted he had only been in post for a few days but after speaking with Detective Chief Inspectors, his predecessors and new colleagues he had found that there was a very good working relationship with partners in Brent and agreed that one area for improvement would be around the sharing of data. All partners highlighted the importance of challenge, openness and accountability in ensuring the partnership worked and felt that was there in Brent. Rachel Crossley added that

an effective partnership needed to have good working relationships further downstream than Board level as well in order to work. This meant challenging and championing staff throughout the organisations the Board worked with and embedding those colleagues in the work of the SAB. Linked to that, work was needed to ensure the messaging on the SABs key priority areas was disseminated collectively.

Noting the different skillsets of each of the partners, the Committee queried how decisions were made and who had the final say. They were advised that when there were SARs, a multi-agency case review subgroup would discuss whether or not the case met the criteria to do an independent SAR and undertake that learning. The group looked at the case of the individual and what window of time partners could provide information on in that person's life. As such, deciding whether to refer the case to a SAR was a mutual decision which would then be presented to Nicola Brownjohn as Independent Chair to ratify whether or not Brent would do the SAR and what areas the SAR would look into. On a case level outside of the SAR process, Adult Social Care would lead that and make those decisions with input where necessary.

Members advised officers that when, as councillors, they co-ordinated operations with different agencies and there was a need for police presence, it was sometimes difficult to get police presence due to the demand pressures the police were under. They asked whether that was the experience of partners in their safeguarding operations and what the most common level of blockage was for police attendance. Claudia Brown responded, highlighting the introduction of 'right care, right person', a police initiative to ensure that police attendance to incidents was appropriate and that they were the last port of call. Police would still attend life and death situations and where there was a potentially dangerous situation. For Adult Social Care, the majority of cases requiring police attendance were when doing a Mental Health Assessment, and the police would attend those cases as appropriate. If there were other incidents requiring police assistance, such as an inability to gain access to a property, then the police would attend. As such, when Adult Social Care had required police presence they had attended. The Safeguarding Team had developed links and built relationships with the police so that when there was a case they were concerned about they were able to have that open communication with the police about it.

Noting that there had been two SARs in the reporting year, and the aim to do rapid learning and training from SARs in future, the Committee asked how that would be embedded across partners. Nicola Brownjohn explained that work would be led by the multi-agency case review subgroup. There were action plans in place so that team leaders could ensure those actions were taking place and ensure there was evidence of that. She highlighted the importance of being definite of the completion dates of those actions in order to fully monitor their impact. Reporting from the case review subgroup would then come to the SAB and if there were any concerns that some actions had not been taken then that could be escalated to the SAB Exec Group.

The Chair thanked those present for their contributions and drew the item to a close. He invited members to make recommendations with the following RESOLVED:

- i) To recommend that an Internal Communications Strategy was drawn up for data sharing between partners.

7. **Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements) Report October 2022 - March 2024**

The Chair welcomed Keith Makin (Independent Chair and Scrutineer, Brent Safeguarding Children Forum) to the meeting and invited him to introduce the item.

Keith Makin began by highlighting the similarities and coherence between the children's and adult's safeguarding arrangements, whilst also noting the different legislation and guidance, which was outlined in the report. He advised members that the key role of the partnership was to ensure that the three statutory partners – police, health, and the Council / local authority – worked closely together on safeguarding and were well sighted on strategic priorities that needed to be developed and achieved. The partnership was also required by legislation to produce an annual report. In addition to this, the partners were tasked with ensuring that the learning and development programme and strategy was developed based on what was happening in Brent and nationally. Part of the safeguarding arrangements were to carry out safeguarding children practice reviews and rapid reviews, which he felt were developed very well in Brent. His role as Chair was to be a critical friend and ensure that challenge between partners happened in a healthy way. There was a small Safeguarding Partners Executive Group which he was a member of and a much wider Brent Safeguarding Children Forum which had a large range of partners including people from the community, voluntary organisations, education, hospital trusts and mental health providers.

Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) added that there were some very longstanding relationships within the Brent safeguarding partnership and an institutional culture of openness and honesty, which she saw as crucial to safeguarding. She concluded by highlighting that the learning that took place within the partnership filtered through to all aspects of children's social care in Brent.

The Chair thanked Keith Makin and the Cabinet Member for their introduction and invited comments and questions from those present, with the following issues raised:

The Committee began by asking Keith what he had found coming into the partnership that he felt worked very well in Brent, and where he felt there needed to be some further focus. In response, Keith Makin advised that he had worked across a number of partnerships both in London and nationally, and one of the roles of the Independent Scrutineer was to bring experience from other places, including national developments, to make comparisons and bring in good practice. He had witnessed partnerships at different stages of development, and felt that the 'wow' factor in Brent was that colleagues had been very welcoming, open, and the discussions he had with different agencies and partners had been very mature. He had been impressed by the level of involvement from GPs which he highlighted was strong in Brent compared to other places he had worked. The Partnership Managers were also very supportive, and he offered thanks for their work. In terms of work in progress and areas for focus and improvement, there had been four

areas of development recommended by the most recent Ofsted inspection which was influencing the way the partnership was developing and working for the next twelve months. One of the areas of focus for the partnership was around working more closely with adults' safeguarding colleagues and continuing the good work already started around the transition from childhood to adulthood, with a recommendation for that transitions age range to be between 14 – 25 years old. Another focus area was around data collection, refining the data so that more meaningful analysis could take place, learning from various audits and rapid reviews to feed in to that data analysis. One example of that work being taken forward was following a multi-agency audit on a number of cases involving young girls where there had been an emerging pattern of undiagnosed or unrecognised neurodiversity, usually ASD, which had led to later problems. As a result of that analysis of the data, a priority around that theme had been established for the next reporting period. He highlighted this as a good example of working together to identify some of the issues within that theme such as the national issues with CAMHS waiting lists and the availability of specialist resource. Another area of development for partners was to engage more with children and young people across the borough and getting the lived and felt experience of children and young people into the various partnership settings. Keith Makin and partners hoped that when the annual report was presented the following year the voice of the child would come through and that the partners could provide real examples of how children and young people had been brought in.

The Chair then invited members of Brent Youth Parliament to contribute. Following on from Keith Makin's response, Brent Youth Parliament asked how the partnership planned to bring the voice of young people into the work. They were advised that the partnership had not yet worked that out as there was a want to do that in collaboration with children and young people. Keith Makin highlighted that the first stage of the work would be to engage with children and young people from all of the different settings they were a part of. One thing that other places were doing that Brent could consider would be to have young scrutineers form part of the arrangements and he had some personal experience of successful outcomes from that.

Brent Youth Parliament asked whether there were any youth representatives currently sitting on any of the groups. Keith Makin advised that there were currently no youth representatives in formal safeguarding settings, i.e. the Safeguarding Partnership Executive Group, the Safeguarding Forum, the Multi-Agency Audit Group, or the Case Review Group. Palvinder Kudhail (Director Early Help and Social Care, Brent Council) added that there were examples of youth representation within Brent in other teams that could be modelled and built upon, working with children and young people to see what would work best. For example, some groups viewed videos or listened to podcasts made by young people to hear their experiences and what they were feeling. Young people attended the Corporate Parenting Committee on a regular basis and would speak on a particular theme and run workshops for Committee members. There were also young people recruited to do visits to commissioned accommodation from semi-independent providers and who had conducted interviews for officers in the Participation Team. The Committee was encouraged and hoped for further engagement with young people in the future.

The Committee asked how much engagement with parents and families took place when it came to children's safeguarding. Palvinder Kudhail explained that when a referral was received the first step was to make contact with the child's parent or carer, where appropriate, and the assessment was then done very closely with the parent or carer, where appropriate, so that they were clear about what the concerns were and how there was a need to work together to address the issues and avoid escalation. There were some situations where some information would not be shared with parents or carers initially if that put the child at risk but otherwise the approach was very much to work with parents, carers and the wider family.

The Committee asked what other engagement the partnership had with other agencies as well as other local authorities. Keith Makin explained that there were several levels of engagement with various organisations including strong and increasing relationships with neighbouring boroughs on safeguarding issues. The Partnership Managers across NWL worked closely together and there was a Pan-London grouping for Chair's of safeguarding forums. There was also learning taken from other partnership's safeguarding practice reviews, audits and outcomes. For example, at a recent Case Review Group meeting there was a live example from another borough who had learnt a lot from a particular case that Brent's group then studied and analysed. The membership of the Forum was also broad and contributed lively discussions and presentations from various organisations. That included two lay members who made valuable contributions to the Forum and community and voluntary organisations specialising in children's services. There was also a central mailing list for communications to independent sector organisations who may not be involved in the Forum but for whom it would be useful for them to receive certain information from themes coming out of safeguarding activity. At an operational level, there was detailed activity across local authorities, such as where a young person might be in another borough but going to school in Brent or where a young person may have associations which spanned a number of local authorities. For example, where county lines was a factor and there may be victims and perpetrators spread across a large geographical area, the partnership would include all agencies who were aware of those young people and those agencies would come together to do some mapping looking at hotspot areas and common issues and draw in professionals involved with those young people where necessary. Councillor Grahl added that where she had seen examples of safeguarding issues that spanned boroughs she had been impressed at the quality of collaboration between different boroughs and agencies.

The Committee asked whether the partnership did outreach work in schools on certain topics such as bullying or knife crime. Keith Makin confirmed that there were initiatives in Brent jointly between the police and other agencies which the partnership was closely involved in. Andrew Brien (Detective Superintendent, NW BCU – Metropolitan Police) explained that he did not have any examples in Brent as he was new in post but had done this type of work previously and looked forward to progressing that in Brent. For example, working with Safer Schools Officers, he had been programmes covering knife crime, substance misuse and domestic abuse. The police had also been engaging with young people through youth ambassadors, who had created a series of videos where young people explained what it was like to experience a stop and search, which had been very useful for police officers to understand the impact of being spoken to by a police officer and then searched. Councillor Grahl added information about an outreach programme called 'My Ends 2.0', for which funding had been secured from the GLA. The

programme was being delivered by the Community Safety Team and provided funding to youth organisations across the borough working to reduce violent crime. A large amount of work on this had been done in conjunction with grassroots organisations, particularly focused in areas where violent crime was known to be higher such as Harlesden and Stonebridge.

The Committee highlighted the valuable resource of schools and school settings in helping to identify safeguarding issues and helping to prevent or reduce safeguarding incidents, including having a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for every school. Often safeguarding issues could be identified through schools from very low-level activity such as a change in behaviour or increased absences. Keith Makin agreed that education settings were a very important part of the partnership. The partnership was currently working on ensuring education partners from all education settings were tied into the partnership. There had been an expectation that the government's most recent iteration of Working Together 2023 guidance would introduce education formally as a fourth statutory partner but that had not come to fruition. Although there was no formal requirement, there had been discussions and agreement locally in Brent to treat education as if it were a fourth partner, so the partnership was working closely with someone from the Department for Education (DfE) to help bring that representative in and was speaking with education specialists and leaders across the borough in all settings, including non-formal settings such as home education and the Brent Virtual School. While that work was ongoing, there was incorporation of education establishments in the partnership through the Safeguarding Forum with many of those school representatives being members of staff with direct oversight of safeguarding within their school. A list of represented schools was outlined in the report, and the partnership also linked in with the DSL network.

Continuing to discuss schools, the Committee asked whether they were adopting a more robust approach to bullying, online bullying, and, as a direct consequence sometimes, self-harming. Members were advised that schools had very robust safeguarding structures in place and were mandated to do so, with nominated individuals who had that oversight within each school. Part of the processes within schools was dealing with bullying, which was also examined by Ofsted.

The Chair then invited Brent Youth Parliament to ask further questions. Representatives asked whether partners felt there was a stigma in relation to mental health for young people and whether the partnership was doing anything to tackle that. Keith Makin responded that he personally felt there was an element of stigma and lack of understanding around mental health issues for young people and this was something the partnership was focused on. A multi-agency audit conducted recently had identified some of the difficulties that children and young people and their families experienced in accessing mental health services as well. He felt that part of addressing that would be to hear from children and young people and families collectively in relation to what is good or poor about the system. He added that, collectively, society was not understanding the pressures children and young people were under and how that could lead to mental health problems. Sue Sheldon (Assistant Director for Safeguarding Adults and Children, Brent Council) added that there was a traditional way of tackling mental health issues through CAMHS which did not always reach all young people so work was being done to look at alternative pathways and review mental health services in the borough.

Brent Youth Parliament asked whether the partnership had a plan for tackling gang violence. Keith Makin highlighted that Zoe Tattersall (Strategic Partnerships Lead for Safeguarding Children, Brent Council) and he had met with the Senior Police Officer leading on gang violence across the borough who had described the situation across the borough in detail, which had been helpful to understand, but there was not a developed plan on tackling that yet. He highlighted this as a primary concern that the partnership would want to concentrate on. Andrew Brien added to the discussion, highlighting that gang violence was multi-faceted and the police in particular wanted to focus on exploitation, targeting those who recruited young people to join criminal gangs. If the police were able to identify those recruiting at the stem then that helped to reduce gang crime and violence significantly. Additionally, the police were able to enforce gang injunction orders which were civil orders placed on young people through the Crown Court which restricted particular behaviours of that person, such as restricting them to only one mobile phone, forbidding their interactions with certain named individuals or prohibiting their ability to access certain locations, which helped to reduce and prevent gang violence.

In terms of how the partners collaborated and communicated with each other to resolve safeguarding issues, Palvinder Kudhail highlighted that information was shared at a very early stage. When a referral was received by the Brent Family Front Door (BFFD), depending on the seriousness of the referral, all partner agencies would be asked to share the information they already had about that person and their family. The BFFD was a multi-agency team with police and health colleagues present physically in the civic centre, making that information flow easily. That collaboration then continued as part of the assessment and plan for that person, which would be individualised depending on the needs of the young person and the family.

Noting that there were separate but similar arrangements for safeguarding children and safeguarding adults, and the aim across the next year for the two groups to work more closely together, the Committee asked how the partnerships collaborated and communicated to resolve safeguarding issues so that work was not done in isolation between the two groups. Nicola Brownjohn (Independent Chair, Safeguarding Adults Board) explained that this workstream was building on the work done previously around transitional safeguarding, recognising that if, for example, a child was running county lines then there may well be an adult who was being cuckooed as well. The two partnerships wanted to look at exploitation together as it was clear that this did not stop once the young person reached the age of 18. A Joint Executive Group was also being established, made up of senior leaders for both adults and children's safeguarding and both Chairs to meet on a semi-regular basis and discuss joint or overlapping issues.

The Chair thanked those present for their contributions and drew the item to a close. He invited members to make recommendations with the following RESOLVED:

- i) To recommend that the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee formally endorse the inclusion of education as a fourth partner within children's safeguarding arrangements.
- ii) To recommend that the Committee continued to monitor the police improvement plans being implemented across the Metropolitan Police and within the NW BCU in view of the comments in the paper.

- iii) To formally invite Keith Makin to accompany the Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to the next Brent Youth Parliament event.
- iv) In relation to the commitment to develop data collection outlined in the report, to recommend that the next report details what the current system for data collection and analysis is and what the improvement over the period was.

8. **Recommendations Tracker**


The Committee noted the recommendations tracker.

9. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 7:45 pm
COUNCILLOR KETAN SHETH, Chair

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	<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 18 September 2024</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Deputy Director, Democratic Services</p>
<p>Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme 2024/25</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not Applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix A – Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Chatan Popat Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Strategy and Partnerships chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Amira Nassr Deputy Director, Democratic Services Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 To present the Committee’s work programme for 2024/25.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the Committee’s work programme (set out in Appendix A) be agreed.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The work programme outlines the items which the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee will consider during the municipal year.

3.2.2 The programme is in line with the remit of the Committee which is set out in the Council Constitution (under the Terms of Reference for scrutiny committees¹):

Adult social care, Safeguarding, Children's services, Cultural services, Education, Health, Housing and Public Health and Wellbeing.

The Committee is also responsible for discharging the functions of the Council under Part 4 of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 in respect of the review and scrutiny of relevant NHS bodies or relevant health service providers including:

- reviewing or scrutinising any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the borough; and
- making reports or recommendations to the relevant NHS bodies or relevant health service providers or Full Council on any other matter reviewed or scrutinised; however
- in response to any consultation by the relevant NHS bodies or relevant health service providers in respect of any proposal for a substantial development of the health service in the borough or for a substantial variation in the provision of such service, to make recommendations to Full Council only.

3.2.3 Committee members prioritised items for inclusion in its work programme at its annual work planning meeting, ensuring items selected aligned with:

- The strategic priorities set out in the Borough Plan 2023-27
- Areas of local community concern
- Significant issues affecting a significant number of residents/wards
- Emerging policies, strategies, or key decisions where there is strong interest for scrutiny input.

Nonetheless, this method of prioritisation is in line with best practice².

3.2.4 The work programme of a scrutiny committee is intended to be a flexible, living document that can adapt and change according to the needs of a committee. The 2024/25 work programme will therefore be regularly reviewed throughout the municipal year by the Committee and updated accordingly where necessary.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

¹ Brent Council Constitution, Part 4.

<https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s142996/Part%204%20May%202024%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20.pdf>

² The Good Scrutiny Guide (Centre for Public Scrutiny).

<https://www.cfqs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CfPS-Good-Scrutiny-Guide-v4-WEB-SINGLE-PAGES.pdf>

4.1 Non-executive members were involved in developing the work programme as part of their membership of the Committee.

4.2 In developing its work programme, the Committee held sessions with stakeholders such as cabinet members, corporate directors, and ward councillors to temperature check key priority areas, avoid work duplication, and most importantly confirm the work programme reflects matters of local community concern.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 There are no financial considerations arising from this report. However, budget and financial implications are addressed in the 'Financial Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 There are no legal considerations arising from this report. However, legal implications are addressed in the 'Legal Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no EDI considerations for the purposes of this report. However, EDI implications are addressed in the 'EDI Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of this report. However, climate change and environmental implications are addressed in the 'Climate Change and Environmental Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

9.0 Communication Considerations

9.1 There are no communication considerations for the purposes of this report. However, communication implications are addressed in the 'Communication Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

Report sign off:

Amira Nassr
Deputy Director, Democratic Services

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Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee: 2024/25 Work Programme

Confirmed Meeting Dates:

- Wednesday 30 July 2024, 6pm
- Wednesday 18 September 2024, 6pm
- Wednesday 20 November 2024, 6pm
- Wednesday 22 January 2025, 6pm
- Wednesday 05 March 2025, 6pm
- Monday 2 April 2025, 6pm

Wednesday 30 July 2024

Agenda Item	Cabinet Members / Non-Executive Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
Brent's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Children Annual Report	Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People Palvinder Kudhail, Director, Early Help and Social Care	Keith Makin, Independent Chair and Scrutineer, Brent Safeguarding Children Forum Metropolitan Police NHS
Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Claudia Brown, Director, Adult Social Care	Nicola Brownjohn, Independent Chair, Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Metropolitan Police NHS

Wednesday 18 September 2024

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25	Councillor Ketan Sheth, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	Debra Norman, Corporate Director Law and Governance	-
Overview of SEND provision in the borough	Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People Shirley Parks, Director, Education, Partnerships and Strategy	TBC
Early years provision and progress towards meeting the expansion of childcare entitlements	Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People Palvinder Kudhail, Director, Early Help and Social Care	TBC

Wednesday 20 November 2024

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
<p>Housing Management: Tenant Satisfaction Measures Brent Housing Management (BHM) performance I4B and First Wave Housing - Performance and Standards of New Acquisitions</p>	<p>Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member, Housing</p> <p>Councillor Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member, Regeneration, Planning and Growth</p>	<p>Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services</p> <p>Alice Lester, Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration</p> <p>Spencer Randolph, Director, Housing Services</p>	<p>TBC</p>
<p>Temporary Accommodation Provision and update on Homeless Service and Prevention - both Families and Single Homeless Prevention Service (SHPS)</p>	<p>Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member, Housing</p>	<p>Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services</p> <p>Laurence Coaker, Director, Housing Needs and Support</p>	<p>TBC</p>

Wednesday 22 January 2025

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
CQC Assurance following Local Area Assessment	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Claudia Brown, Director, Adult Social Care	TBC
Co-production and Transformation for Adult Social Care.	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Claudia Brown, Director, Adult Social Care	TBC
Community Health and Wellbeing Performance – all services	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Claudia Brown, Director, Adult Social Care Melanie Smith, Director, Public Health	TBC


Wednesday 5 March 2025

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
Maternity Provisions including update from NCL NHS Start Well Programme	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Melanie Smith, Director, Public Health	NCL NHS
Vaping and Nicotine Cessation	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Melanie Smith, Director, Public Health	TBC
Leisure and Physical Activity	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Melanie Smith, Director, Public Health	TBC

Monday 28 April 2025

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
Meeting the Adult's and Children's Social Care Workforce challenges	<p>Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools</p> <p>Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People</p> <p>Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing</p>	TBC
Annual School Standards and Achievement report	<p>Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools</p>	<p>Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People</p> <p>Shirley Parks, Director, Education, Partnerships and Strategy</p>	Headteachers from Brent schools

*Placeholder slots have been saved as per the request of Lead Members and Corporate Directors

	Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 18 September 2024
	Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People and NHS Borough Director
	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools - Councillor Gwen Grahl
Overview of SEND Provision across the Borough	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	Appendix 1 - SEND Strategy 2021-2025
Background Papers:	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Shirley Parks Director, Education, Partnerships and Strategy Shirley.parks@brent.gov.uk Roxanna Glennon Head of Inclusion Roxanna.glennon@brent.gov.uk Jonathan Turner Borough Director, Brent Integrated Care Partnership jonathanturner2@nhs.net

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of services for Brent's children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It provides an update about the previous report on SEND to the Scrutiny and Wellbeing Committee in September 2023, recommendations arising from that and references the local area position in relation to a future inspection by Ofsted/CQC on the effectiveness of local area SEND partnership arrangements. The report also includes an update on delivery of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme, aimed at reducing pressure on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools' Grant.
- 1.2 The report demonstrates Brent's commitment to working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to co-produce the service offer in line with both statutory guidelines and the needs of Brent's community. In the face of ever-increasing financial

pressures on all services that work to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families, this report includes clear examples where the Brent local partnership is working in a proactive, ambitious and dynamic way to overcome these challenges in a sustainable manner.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the content of the report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities

3.1.1 The services referred to in this report support delivery of the Council's Borough Plan priority 'Best Start in Life', which aims to support all children and young people through access to education and opportunity by working in partnership with schools and other partners. Services for children and young people with SEND support their education in early years settings, schools and post-16 institutions.

3.2 Background

National Context

3.2.1 The legal duties introduced in The Children and Families Act 2014 place responsibilities on the local area partnership (the local authority, health partners, settings, schools and colleges) to identify and meet the needs of children aged 0-25 who have SEND. defined in the Act as:

- **Special Educational Needs:** A child or young person has special educational needs if he/she has a learning difficulty or a disability which calls for special educational provision to be made or them.
- **Learning Difficulty:** A child or a young person of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if they:
 - Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others the same age, or
 - Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions or in employment without support.

3.2.2 The duties and reforms to the SEND system introduced in 2014 aspired to achieve an integrated 0-25 system spanning education, health and care, driven by high ambition and preparation for adulthood. The Brent SEND Strategy 2021-25 is the vehicle to express how the Brent Children's Trust is implementing the Code of Practice 2015, that sets out how the Act should be interpreted. The strategy, that was co-created by parents, carers and those who work with them across the local area partnership, sets out the Children's Trust vision, ambitions and priorities for children with SEND. The local area partnership has developed an action plan to support the delivery of the ambitions set out in the SEND Strategy 2021-25. Actions on the plan are reviewed at each Children's Trust relevant to the topic of discussion to ensure that effective progress is made in its delivery.

3.2.3 The challenges facing the national system to support children and young people with SEND have been highlighted in several government reviews and reports, including

national SEND Reviews in 2019 and 2022 and reports to the Education Select Committee, the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee and, most recently, the Isos Partnership report on SEND (published July 2024 and jointly commissioned by the Local Government Association and the County Council Network). Focus has been on how the system can be made to work best for all families and how it can ensure the effective and sustainable use of resources.

3.2.4 In response, the government published the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan in March 2023, that sits alongside reforms to health and social care, including the introduction of Integrated Care Systems and wider reforms to adult social care, the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the Ofsted and CQC Inspection Framework for SEND.

3.2.5 Since publication of the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, there has been a change of government. The new government has at the time of writing not made clear its position with regards to SEND. Therefore, this paper assumes that the direction of travel set by the previous government's plan for SEND still stands (though this assumption is caveated by the acknowledgement that this situation may alter). If the findings of Ofsted's recent 'Big Listen' (published September 2024) were to impact the Government's educational agenda moving forwards, it can be inferred from the findings of the Big Listen that provision for children with SEND will remain a political priority within the context of education, with key foci being the funding of SEND provision and the assessment of the quality of that provision (especially within a mainstream context).

3.2.6 The Improvement Plan identifies three key challenges facing the SEND system nationally that it sets out to address:

- a) Outcomes for children and young people with SEN or in alternative provision are poor and young people are not as well prepared for adulthood and employment as they should be.
- b) Navigating the SEND and alternative provision system is not a positive experience for children, young people and their families, who need confidence that their children will get the right support, in the right place and at the right time.
- c) Despite unprecedented investment in the high needs budget, the system is not delivering financial sustainability and value for money in meeting the needs of children, young people and families.

3.2.7 Over the past year, the Department for Education has been testing the development of new national standards to address these challenges with a small number of local authority and regional partnerships, with a view to establishing national standards by the end of 2025. The aim is to develop:

- An inclusive single national SEND and alternative provision system, that starts with improved mainstream provision that is built on early and accurate identification of needs, delivers high quality teaching of a knowledge-rich curriculum and gives prompt access to targeted support where it is needed. This includes establishing a 3-tier alternative provision system that includes targeted support, time-limited placements and longer-term placements.
- Nationally consistent standards for how needs are identified and met at every stage of a child's journey across education, health and care, including the development of a national digitised Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

process and conflict resolution via mandatory mediation rather than the first level tribunal system only.

- New statutory guidance to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) that set out how statutory responsibilities for SEND should be discharged, a new performance framework and a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for funding SEND provision.

SEND Prevalence in Brent

- 3.2.8 As of September 2024, there are 3769 children and young people aged 0-25 with an EHCP on roll at Brent schools, which at 4.6% of the school population is similar to national. 11.2% of pupils are identified with additional needs that can be met at SEN support where a need is identified but does not meet threshold for an EHCP (compared to 13% nationally). 56% of children and young people with an EHCP are identified with communication and interaction needs (autistic spectrum disorder and speech, language and communication). The average growth in EHCP numbers has been approximately 10% over the last three years, consistent with the national position.
- 3.2.9 Between 2023 and 2024 the number of EHC Plans increased across all age groups, with the highest in the under 5 age group (42% compared to 25% nationally) and the 5 to 10 age group (9.7%, 11% nationally). Those age 5 to 10 account for 38% of the maintained EHC Plan cohort, age 11 to 15 accounts for 31% and those age 16 to 19 account for 17%. This means that additional local special places in both primary and secondary are needed to respond to increasing demand as EHCP numbers increase, as well as a growing need for provision for young people in the 16-25 age range. This is underpinned by the fact that 50% of new EHC Plans issued in 2023 are for children aged 5 to 10, 37% to children under 5, and 12% to those age 11 to 15.
- 3.2.10 As the number of EHCPs has increased, the number of children with an EHCP placed in mainstream schools has increased from 46% in 2020 to 65% in 2024. 78% of children and young people issued a new EHCP in 2024 are in mainstream school compared to 69% in 2021 (national 74%; statistical neighbours 77%) and 13% aged 0-25 are placed in special schools (national 11%; statistical neighbours 11%) (Source: SEN2 January 2024). Overall, 65% of children and young people with an EHCP in Brent aged 0-25 attend a mainstream provision – this is in line with the expectation in the Children and Family Act 2014 that all children should be educated in mainstream where possible.

Overview of provision for children and young people with SEND in Brent

Governance

- 3.2.11 Governance of the Brent SEND local area partnership is through the Children's Trust, chaired by the Corporate Director, Children and Young People. The Inclusion Strategic Board that reports to the Children's Trust brings together partners to review performance and discuss service developments. There continues to be collaboration across health, education and care and a commitment to work in partnership to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people, building on the progress noted in Brent's 2019 Ofsted/CQC joint local area SEND Inspection. For children with SEND, priority areas of focus are:

- To support children and young people to achieve good mental health and resilience through addressing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) waiting times and implementing the 'Thrive' model.
- To build whole system pathways to support children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs through early intervention, and to manage rising demand at statutory levels.
- To ensure that neurodiverse children and young people and their families and carers are able to live well and receive appropriate and timely support when required.
- To address health inequalities.

3.2.12 Recent work undertaken to assess Brent's readiness for a Local Area SEND Inspection has revealed areas where partnership working could be strengthened, especially in the area of the joint strategic commissioning of services between health, and Brent Council (Children and Young People and Public Health services). The Children's Trust will be receiving a report on 24th September 2024 on progress across the health sector in meeting the needs of children with SEND through commissioned services. This report will be used as to confirm the Local Area partnership's approach to the joint commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND.

Engagement with stakeholders

3.2.13 Engagement with families through the Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF), which has over 900 members, continues to be strong. BPCF are active participants in the Inclusion Strategic Board and in the recently established Post-16 Sub-Group of the Board. To further formalise relations between the local authority and BPCF, and to set clear mutually agreed expectations and KPIs, a service level agreement (SLA) is currently being co-produced between the borough and BPCF (expected completion date of October 2024).

3.2.14 A Brent young people's network provides further opportunities to co-produce services. Co-production is central to all strategic developments and operates on a 'nothing about you without you' approach. This is clearly demonstrated in the SEND Strategy 2021-25, the ongoing oversight of the Local Offer/Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) website and, more recently, in the design of a new neurodiversity pathway and development of the supported employment programme. The Inclusion Service was tasked with devising a Youth Forum that supports the 2021-2025 SEND Strategy Plan. This Forum enables young people (14 – 25) with SEND to have an opportunity to be involved in a group whereby they can both receive information and help co-produce initiatives that will support children and young people with SEND (e.g. developments to the EHCP process, training on positive health and wellbeing and travelling independently). Since January 2024, 32 children and young people with SEND have engaged with this programme, with further events planned for October and November 2024 focussing on issues including wellbeing, independence and employment.

Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme

3.2.15 As reported to Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in September 2023, participation in the Department for Education's DBV Programme (see High Needs Block (HNB) Current Position section 3.2.33 below) has been purposefully targeted in Brent towards developing an area wide response to increased demand from the under 7 age group through early intervention to prevent an EHCP where it is not

needed. A new model of working with schools and partners to deliver early intervention, known as 'Intervention First' (IF) to children with social, emotional and mental health needs was piloted during the 2023/24 academic year with the Harlesden cluster of schools. The project is funded by the DfE through the DBV programme until September 2025, but the evidence of the positive impact of this programme to date (both in terms of achieving better outcomes for children and their families, and in terms of cost avoidance on the HNB) suggests that it would be beneficial to explore options for maintaining this offer and broadening its reach to include all Brent schools. For example, at the start of the IF programme schools indicated that they were considering applying for an EHCP for 22 children (53.6% of participants) at the start of the 12-week programme. However, following successful intervention from the IF Team, only 1 school (2% of participants) went on to apply for an EHCP. The work of the IF Team aligns with Brent's aim to upskill the school work force (see 3.2.16, above) to ensure that all schools have the skills and confidence necessary to support a broad range of learners, including those with SEND.

3.2.16 The DBV programme has further elements, focussed on looking at how support for children with SEND is allocated within the borough, namely:

- The development of a model that better uses resources across the system ensuring improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND. This aspect of the commissioning strand has worked to develop a 'Resource Allocation System' (RAS) that seeks to increase the consistency and transparency of how HNB resources are allocated to individual pupils. The RAS was co-produced with schools and parents and will be piloted in the 24/25 academic year.
- The development and implementation of a SEND data dashboard. This dashboard is already fully operational, allowing a more granular monitoring of trends and workflows within SEND. For example, the dashboard has already supported the 0-25 team to considerably improve on their 20-week timeliness from circa 40% of plans issued within the 20-week statutory timescale at the end of 2023, to over 81% of plans being issued within statutory timescales (far higher than the national average of 50.3%).

Early identification of need

3.2.17 Systems for the early identification of need are well embedded. Multiagency decision-making panels that focus on shared responsibilities, such as the Joint Funding Panel, ensure that children and young people's complex needs are being met, including those of children eligible for Continuing Health Care (CHC). A recent positive development, led by the Brent Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) in response to challenges identified by educational settings in accessing support for children with medical needs who do not meet the threshold for CHC is the development of the 'Individual Funding Request' process. Settings have responded positively to this change; a change that demonstrates the positive impact of collaboration between the LA and health partners.

3.2.18 Through the School Effectiveness Partnership Board and regular meetings with headteachers, the Children and Young People's Department leads an effective partnership with local schools to deliver an inclusive agenda. Significant work has been undertaken to develop the capacity of mainstream schools in Brent to identify the SEN needs of pupils early so that they can be supported in the most appropriate way. This includes a SENCO training programme that covers a wide range of needs including autism, dyslexia and social, communication and emotional regulation (SCERTS), which is supporting schools to manage the increased number of young

children whose communication and interaction skills were impacted by the pandemic. The majority of schools have now embedded the Graduated Approach Framework (GAF) which is for children with a SEN need who do not require an EHCP.

- 3.2.19 Despite this increased support offer, some schools remain concerned about how to support children with increasing complexity of need who are being placed in mainstream schools. Relatedly, some parents also communicate to BPCF a lack of confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of their children. To further respond to this challenge, Brent has taken action to both increase the amount of support available to schools, and to increase the amount of funding schools receive for children who are placed in mainstream whilst they await a place in special school, to ensure that no child or setting is disadvantaged simply because of the type of school they attend. Plans are in progress to roll out further ASC specific training to schools in addition to SCERTS (namely, the 'Autism Education Trust' (AET) model), alongside further developing the speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) offer and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) training offer. These latter two training offers (SLCN and SEMH) are being developed in conjunction with colleagues from Health and Public Health.

SEND place planning

- 3.2.20 In response to growing demand in the primary, secondary and post-16 age group, in January 2022 Cabinet approved £44m of capital investment for 427 additional specialist places across mainstream and specialist provision, including a new secondary special school, with these additional places available for the 25/26 academic year. Despite this planned capital investment, increasing demand means that further local specialist places are needed, with current estimates suggesting that up to 188 additional primary and 34 additional secondary special school places are needed to meet current demand (as of September 2024) with further local specialist placements needed moving forwards if Brent is to meet rising demand and mitigate spend in the financially unsustainable independent sector. Brent is currently liaising with colleagues in the education sector to identify providers who may be interested in supporting the development of further specialist provision in the borough. This will help to secure placements for the 117 children with EHCPs in Brent mainstream schools awaiting a placement in a special school.
- 3.2.21 Insufficient specialist SEMH provision within Brent has been identified as an area of particular concern: insufficient capacity in this area is placing considerable financial pressure on the HNB, with 75 CYP with SEMH needs currently being supported in independent school placements at an average cost of £62,752.29/place/annum including transport (circa. £30,000/place/annum more than it would cost to support this vulnerable cohort in local, specialist maintained provision). Furthermore, the lack of specialist SEMH provision in Brent is placing significant pressure on our Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and AP places, as these places are occupied often by children waiting for a place in a specialist SEMH school, and so are not available to provide respite to local schools and children. The impact of this pressure on PRU and AP places is more children at risk of permanent exclusion (PEX) and fixed term exclusion (FTE) as schools cannot access the respite offer that may have mitigated the risk of PEX/FTE. A working group that comprises both LA and external stakeholders (schools and multi-academy trusts) is focusing on the rapid and sustainable development of additional specialist provision in Brent.

Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)

- 3.2.22 There is an expectation in the Code of Practice that a full range of opportunities must be provided to support young people to become visible, active members of society and this message is both embedded within the Brent Borough Plan 2023-2027 and the SEND Strategy 2021-2025. As the number of young people with an EHCP continues to grow, so will demand for supported internships and increased educational opportunities for post-16 CYP with SEND. The local authority is therefore expanding supported internships (SI) and opportunities for young people to prepare for adulthood through developing improved employability skills and work experience.
- 3.2.23 Delivery of the new Post-16 Skills Resource Centre at Welsh Harp will further contribute to meeting demand for places for young people with SEND, in particular young people aged 16-25 with complex learning difficulties. The new Post-16 Skills Resource Centre was agreed by Cabinet in May 2023. The Centre was originally planned to operate from two sites (Welsh Harp and Airco Close), but consideration is now being given to consolidating the provision on Welsh Harp site only. The Welsh Harp centre has a proposed opening date of September 2027.
- 3.2.24 A partnership wide 'Supported Employment Forum' continues to ensure that the offer developed for young people is meaningful and sustainable. The Council, working with anchor organisations including the College of North West London, has expanded the offer of supported internships. In the 23/24 AY, 68 interns participated in the programme with 33 successfully completing the course. Placement rotations included work in the Council and Wembley hotels. The remaining interns were located within the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.
- 3.2.25 A recently updated and co-produced travel assistance policy for Brent has been approved by Cabinet in June 2024. This new travel assistance policy has an increased focus on supporting children and young people with SEND to develop the skills they need to travel independently using public transport. Brent is currently in the process of tendering for a provider of 'independent travel training' (ITT). Once a provider is in place, Brent will have a much-improved PfA offer, as learning to travel safely and independently (where appropriate) is vital to promoting the wellbeing of children and young people with SEND and this service will be offered free of charge to all eligible young people.
- 3.2.26 The Council is looking to support employers across Brent to be autism aware and to expand the number of employers who are achieving the disability confident standards. Brent Works and CYP lead the supported employment forum and through continued development of the post-16 offer, the Brent Partnership will enable more young people with SEND to secure meaningful employment and improved life chances. The aim is to support young adults to become more independent and economically active so that they no longer require the additional provision of an EHCP. A future focus will be placed on strengthening transitions across the partnership between children's and adult services including adult social care and health services. Since 2023, a working group set up by Adult Social Care, but with engagement from education and children's social care has been established to improve the experience of children and young people with SEND and their families as they move from children's to adult's services. BPCF and the Youth Forum will both be involved in any re-design of services, as well as the materials created to explain processes to service users and those who care for them, with an increased focus on ensuring the full accessibility of these materials to all of Brent's diverse community.

Managing Service Demand

3.2.27 In March 2022, the Council recognised the need to increase the capacity of the team supporting children with an EHCP given growth in demand for assessments. The team also includes a dedicated SEND Resolutions Officer to meet the requirement for mandatory mediation meetings that are expected to be a key outcome of the new statutory duties arising from the Improvement Plan. This improved efficiency is made clear in the team’s performance against the statutory requirement to issues an EHCP within a 20-week timeframe. The team’s 20-week data, which now sits at 81% for the calendar year to date – far exceeds the national average figure of 50.3% and shows a marked improvement on the team’s performance in previous years. The 0-25 SEND team’s performance against the 20-week key performance index (KPI) on a month by month basis for the last 2 years is shown in Figure 1 below.

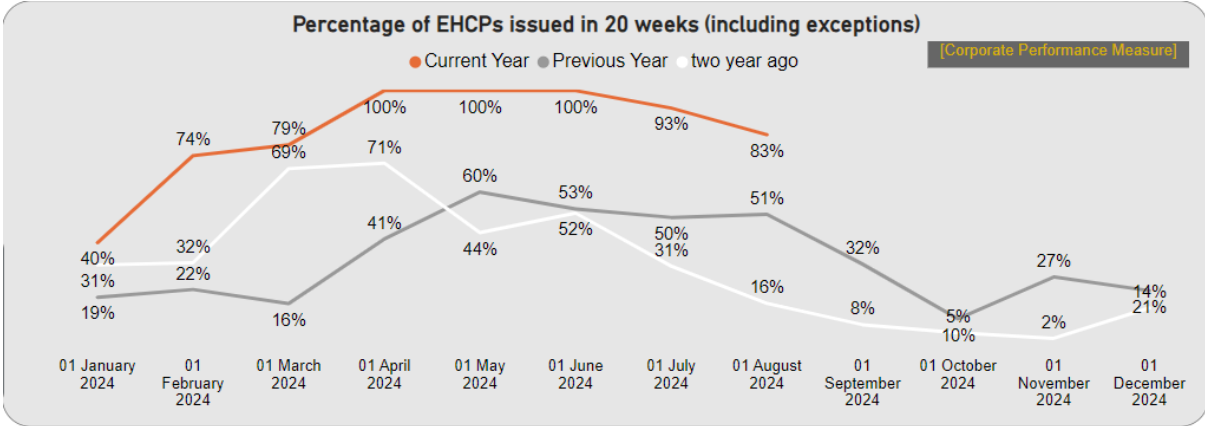


Figure 1: A line graph depicting the 0-25 SEND Team’s 20-week performance data January 2022 – August 2024

3.2.28 However, despite this much needed investment in the SEND team, SEND case officers are continuing to hold 300 cases each (the average in London ranges from 165-325 per case officer) and this presents a potential barrier to case officers being able to case manage effectively (as opposed to simply completing statutory processes). To further support the work of the SEND 0-25 team, further SEND Officers are being recruited as part of the DBV programme, to support the implementation of a new Resource Allocation System (RAS) for children in mainstream settings, early years and Post-16 and to ensure that commitments made as part of the DBV programme do not place further pressure on the SEND 0-25 team.

3.2.29 Continued demand for EHCP assessments, places pressure on both the Educational Psychology (EP) service and SEND case officers. Recruiting for the EP workforce has been challenging with reliance on agency staff, given that there is a national shortfall of trained staff. A Brent recruitment and retention strategy was developed to respond to this and is already paying dividends, with two new main grade EPs due to join the service in the Autumn term 2024. The additional of these EPs will not only mitigate spend on locum EPs but will also support Brent to deliver a more consistent, comprehensive and integrated SEND support offer across Brent schools. Figure 2, below, depicts the number of EHCPs issued by Brent on a month basis for the last two years. Figure 2 shows that, on average, the number of EHCPs issued by Brent have been higher in 2024 on a month-by-month basis than they have been in the two preceding years, demonstrating the sustained pressures on the 0-25 team and the educational psychology service.

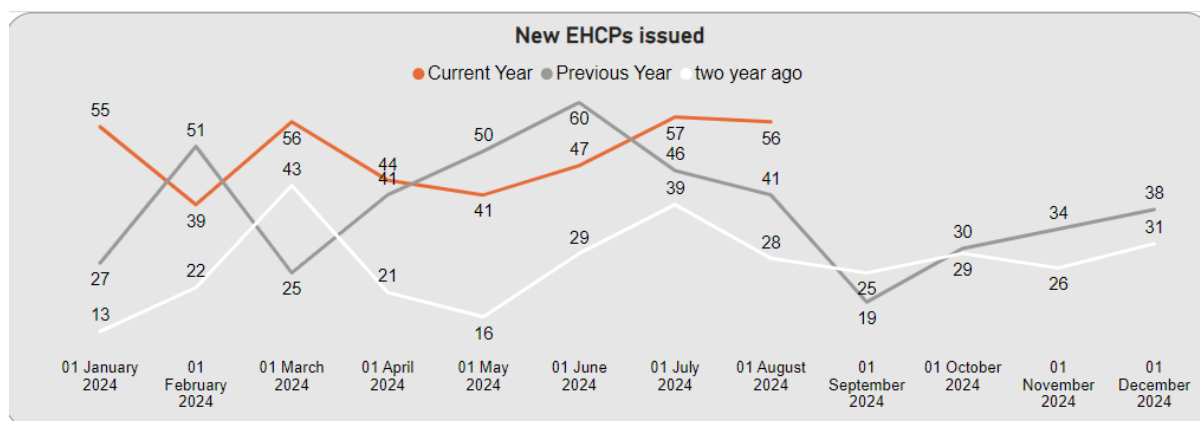


Figure 2: A line graph depicting the number of EHCPs issued by Brent on a month-by-month basis, January 2022 - August 2024

3.2.30 Steps have also been taken to improve collaboration with families to enable a better experience of the SEND system through improved transparency and shared decision making. The Head of Inclusion meets every month with representatives of BPCF and attends BPCF meetings. Additionally, there are bi-monthly ‘meet the leaders’ workshops, which the Director of Education, Partnerships and Strategy attends twice a year. The agenda of these workshops is set by parents and the actions followed up reflect their concerns and priorities. Additionally, all council departments such as Brent Hubs work with the Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) to shape the offer for families with children with SEND. At a case management level, BPCF has worked with the SEND management team to draft template letters to families and annual review documentation. BPCF co-produced Brent’s new EHCP template (due to come into use September 2024) and guidance notes, both containing a clearer focus on the voice of the child and preparation for adulthood (PfA) goals in response to feedback from children and young people with SEND and their families. In the last month, feedback from BPCF has shaped practice in the 0-25 team around communications, with a particular focus on ensuring that parents and carers receive confirmation that, for example, emails have been received, and clarity around when responses can be expected. Additionally, Brent’s new travel assistance policy was co-produced with BPCF.

Quality Assurance of EHCPs

3.2.31 The multiagency quality assurance and performance framework continues to be effective and identifying areas for improvement. In the 23/24 academic year, multi-agency audit of EHCPs revealed that of the 16 plans audited across the year (4 per quarter), 8 were rated as ‘Good’ and 8 were rated as ‘Requires Improvement (RI)’. The majority of plans rated RI were rated RI for reasons relating to quality of comments from social care colleagues (with, for example, comments lacking sufficient detail); action is being taken to address this issue. A regular EHCP QA report explores in full detail where practice needs to improve, with the direction of travel in terms being broadly positive: in the 1st quarter, 3 plans were graded as ‘RI’ and only one was good, whilst by the 4th quarter, 3 plans were rated as ‘Good’ with elements of ‘Outstanding’ and only one plan was graded as ‘RI’. For the 24/25 AY further refinement to the EHCP QA process is proposed, with external LA colleagues from Harrow being invited to join the QA process to ensure a broad and balanced analysis of plans.

- 3.2.32 Parents/carers and young people regularly provide feedback on their satisfaction with services and the Inclusion Service review tribunals and complaints to understand if there are any recurrent themes in the issues raised that require a systemic response. As a result, guidance has been developed for officers on how to ensure that all processes and procedures and how decisions are made are clearly articulated; a new EHCP template has been developed (launched August 2024) developed with input from BPCF and increased training is planned across professional groups on ways to meet SEN need.

SEND Support Services

- 3.2.33 Services and systems are designed around the needs of children and young people to achieve the principles in the SEND Strategy.

Within Early Help, a neighbourhood model of service delivery is established in Brent through Family Wellbeing Centres (FWC) that deliver services in the community and, building on this model, health partners are developing paediatric and health focused hubs. FWC staff have been trained as SEND navigators to help parents access the support they need. FWCs offer a range of co-located multiagency and multi-disciplinary services for children and young people with SEND. From April 2022 to March 2023, 456 children and young people with an identified disability were registered with a FWC, 160 of whom were under 5s, 158 were 6–11-year-olds, 120 were 12–18-year-olds and 18 were 19–25-year-olds. From April 2023 to March 2024, 578 children and young people with an identified disability were registered with a FWC, 181 of whom were under 5s, 192 were 6–11-year-olds, 167 were 12–18-year-olds and 38 were 19–25-year-olds.

Within Education (Inclusion), since July 2024, the SEND Support Services have been placed under the management of a new 'SEND Support Service manager' post. This is a new position and a new structure for education focused SEND support services in Brent. The new structure is designed to make access to SEND support services more straightforward for providers, and to ensure consistently joined up working between teams. The Council outreach teams for autism, early years intervention, portage, deaf and visual impairment services, SEND support services as well as the intervention first team and the inclusion support teams all now sit under the umbrella of 'SEND Support'. Initial feedback for internal stakeholders has been positive, with colleagues reporting that it is now easier to e.g. know who to contact for which service. Feedback from external services will be gathered via the SENCo forum once we are further through the academic year 24/25. The SEND Support services will work to ensure consistent application of the GAF (see 3.2.16, above) in all Brent schools, as well as deliver training to upskill Brent's education workforce (see 3.2.16 and 3.2.17, above for further details of Brent's training offer for schools).

- 3.2.34 Below is a snapshot of feedback on some of Brent's SEN Outreach Services:

Brent Outreach Autism Team (BOAT)

BOAT is a mainstream school advisory service that has been developed to support staff working with autistic children and young people, and their families. BOAT supports CYP up to the age of 16 years or up to 19 years if the CYP attends a mainstream sixth form.

For the academic year 23/24 888 students were known to BOAT ranging in age 2-19yr and 38% (337 students) were actively supported through advice / support and training for their settings. This increased in the 23/24 academic year with 1036

students being known to BOAT ranging in age 2-19yrs and 37% (383 students) of these students being actively supported through advice / support and training for their settings.

In 22/23 195 requests for involvement were received following diagnosis. In 23/24, 310 requests for support were received. Of the requests for service following diagnosis received in 22/23, 30% of those requests were for nursery aged children. In 23/24, the percentage was 42% of the requests, showing a shift towards growing need in the early years.

Feedback for the service is consistently positive, with some examples below:

"I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt thanks for the exceptional support and collaboration during our partnership. Your expertise and dedication were crucial to our success, and it was an absolute pleasure working with you." (SENCO)

"BOAT are a diamond in Brent. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your very busy schedule to share some extremely valuable advice." (Family support worker).

"I just wanted to provide some feedback on the Fathers First event that my husband attended this morning. It was excellent, really useful, and previously, there haven't been many similar events specifically for Dads. Both Carol and Clare were excellent in terms of providing advice and support. He also took part in the raffle for a sensory box at Wembley Stadium for the England vs Belgium game and won tickets!" (feedback from Fathers group that BOAT spoke at).

Early Years Inclusion Support Team (EYIST)

Brent EYIST is a service that provides support to professionals and families who are supporting children aged 0-5 for whom a concern about their development exists. The service works with both maintained and private settings. From September 2024, the portage team will become part of the EYIST to promote closer working between these services. The work EYIST undertakes to promote timely intervention and support for children aged 0-5 is in line with Brent's strategic commitment to early intervention to ensure improved outcomes for children and young people.

In the 23/24 academic year, the EYIST supported 521 children within the PVI sector, childminder settings and in nursery classes of maintained schools for the full duration of the academic year. In addition to these children, 134 further children received support for part of the year but then either moved away from Brent, left EY provision or made maximum progress and no longer needed/met criteria for EYIST involvement and so cases were closed in-year. This is a slight decrease on the comparative figure of 538 in the previous academic year, likely to be due to embedding of the Early Years Graduated Approach Framework and ongoing skilling up and effective training of the early years sector to support more children at a universal level of support. This provides evidence that Brent's investment in training for educational providers is having impact.

Satisfaction surveys are completed annually in July. These are to obtain the views of parent/carers, setting SENCOs and receiving schools at the point of Primary transition. Feedback on the service has been positive, as evidenced below:

- *I was always able to ask for help and advice when I needed it. I was never made to feel like I couldn't* (Parent/Carer feedback)
- *The EYIST were always on time. They came when their supposed to come see my child and they were serious in their work to make sure the child gets the right support* (Parent/Carer feedback)
- *We always been super supported by (EYIST) and value the advice given. We know we can always reach out and often receive positive feedback from X about the support we provide for children and early identification of SEN'S. Personally, I think Brent is the most effective and supportive borough for families and children with additional needs.* (Setting SENCO feedback)
- *I would love to say a big thank you to (EYIST) as X is the most dedicated person in what she does. Always giving the best advice and answering our inquiries promptly and efficiently. We are deeply grateful for the continuous support.* (Setting SENCO feedback)
- *You are the only borough that have done transition calls with us, this is really helpful and builds a good relationship with parents, school and nurseries* (out of borough receiving SENCO at point of Primary Transition)
- *The support and knowledge provided by (EYIST) are indeed crucial during children's transition periods. (EYIST's) work emphasises the profound effect that thoughtful educational support can have on student outcomes, highlighting the importance of essential guidance in pivotal moments of a child's development. Thank you.* (Brent receiving SENCO at point of Primary Transition)

In addition to the direct work with early years providers and children and their families, EYIST has worked closely with other professionals around the government funded Start for Life programme and embedded quality improvement across the sector to ensure that young children with SEND are a central consideration of early years work. In the upcoming academic year 2024/25 there are a number of priorities for the team, including:

- Focus on closer collaboration with professionals to ensure effective school place planning for the Reception intake.
- Review of portage service delivery to ensure maximum impact on the youngest and most complex children with additional needs in the borough as well as smooth transition into early years education provision.
- Implementing a banding system for children known to EYIST in order to ensure optimal early years support to children and settings prioritised by need.
- Ongoing focus on promoting approaches that are positive about neurodiversity across the Brent EY sector. First EY SEND specific Brent conference is planned for 12th October.

Alternative Education Provision

- 3.2.35 There is effective oversight of the placement of young people who cannot settle in mainstream in alternative provisions, including in Brent's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Brent River College, and in Ashley College, Brent's medical PRU. The local authority also works closely with Roundwood School and Community Centre – an alternative provision free school with wraparound youth offer, established in 2019. A panel oversees the referral and placement process for the 6-day statutory exclusions timeline and for health needs provision.

- 3.2.36 To improve decision-making for children with health needs, a separate panel was established in September 2023 that combines education, health, and care specialists to oversee the placements of children with medical needs. Since introducing this new panel, decisions based on health needs have been made with greater coherence and consistency, with specialist insight ensuring children and young people are receiving education regardless of need. Furthermore, as a result of this panel, schools have been better supported to ensure that they are delivering a suitable offer for children and young people.
- 3.2.37 To ensure that Brent children who are not currently attending school (because they are receiving home tuition, or are being educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS) are not further disadvantaged, from November 2024 a scheme will start whereby families of children who are eligible for free school meals in Brent will be able to receive supermarket vouchers to enable them to purchase food for their children at an equivalent value to the cost of a school dinner. It is hoped this scheme will go some way towards reducing the vulnerability of this cohort and ensuring that Brent is fulfilling its statutory duties towards all children, regardless of where they are accessing their education.

Areas of current focus for further improvement of SEND services

- 3.2.38 The priority since the pandemic has been strengthening earlier intervention and the quality, impact and experience of the SEND system. While progress has been made, there remain areas that require further enhancement:

- Improving commissioning of support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs in Brent. 56% of children and young people with an EHCP in Brent have 'Communication and Interaction' as their primary area of need, with a significant number of children with an EHCP having SLCN as a secondary or tertiary area of need (though this data is not currently formally collated). In addition to children with an EHCP, Brent has a higher proportion of children receiving SEN support identified with speech, language and communication needs as compared to national (29% compared to 22%).

Currently, the contract that the LA has with the commissioned provider (CLCH) to deliver SALT is insufficient to cover the number of children requiring SALT support. This is leading the LA to spend on spot-purchasing of SALT support. It is hoped that a borough wide approach to SLCN can be developed with engagement from Health, Public Health, Early Help and Education services over the next two years. In the intervening period, a new specification for statutory provision is currently being developed to ensure the contract to minimise the need for spot-purchasing of support. Work is ongoing with the SEND Support Service to redesign the SLCN support offer available to schools and early years providers.

- The implementation of the neurodevelopment pathway for the assessment of conditions such as autism spectrum condition, which will require the joint commissioning and delivery of targeted and specialist support with the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)/ Integrated Care Board (ICB) and into adult services remains a priority. A primary focus is on addressing the neurodiversity assessment waiting lists and establishing effective interventions. Since 2022, wait times for neurodiversity assessments have come down from an average of 36-48 months to the current wait time of 18-24 months which is a significant improvement, though for Brent's families and children a wait of e.g. 20 months for assessment is still too

long. This improvement in wait times for neurodiversity assessments is attributable to the ICB now using Mental Health nurses to complete assessments, thus increasing the staff pool available for this work.

It should be noted that Brent currently has no Health commissioned service for neurodevelopmental assessments for children and young people aged 5-8, with CAMHS currently covering this gap. Concerns have been escalated with Health partners by the LA, given the rising pressures on this service and the already considerable wait times for assessment. For example, 302 children under 5 were on the waiting list for a social communication assessment (SOCA), with the average waiting time at 87 weeks in Q1 2023/24.

- The partnership is continuing to work on implementation of the Thrive Framework so that there is a 'no wrong door' policy for young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. A focused workshop is being held on 19th September to confirm gaps in the current Thrive system, with a focus on early identification and intervention services to prevent escalation to specialist CAMHS. This would address current waiting lists for services (currently an average of 2 years wait across all areas). There is a need to secure additional appropriate investment in clinical services through the ICB, as Brent remains underfunded compared to other North West London boroughs. 54% of young people were seen by 4 weeks (for initial assessment) and there were 394 young people waiting for CAMHS treatment, with an average wait of 2 years (Q1 2023/24). Concerns regarding wait times have been escalated to the ICB and we are currently awaiting details of the proposed resolution.
- Ensuring vulnerable children and young people are more effectively supported across the partnership in school attendance and improving oversight and transparency of pupil movements in relation to alternative provision. A particular focus for the 24/25 academic year will be on ensuring that Brent is maintaining an effective database of all students registered as Elective Home Education (EHE) and Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) so that the borough can ensure effective safeguarding of these cohorts.
- A dedicated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for SEND to inform joint commissioning requirements has not been developed. Brent's current JSNA dates from 2019 and thus stands in need of updating building on a recent SEND Needs Assessment document produced by Public Health in 2023.
- Improved sufficiency of special school places within Brent (see 3.2.20, above).

The areas for improvement identified above have been identified as priorities by the local area partnership. Progress is tracked in the Inclusion Strategic Board (reporting to the Children's Trust).

Brent's SEND Inspection History

- 3.2.39 The last full SEND inspection of the Brent local partnership by Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC) was in 2017 when a written statement of action was required to deal with some identified weaknesses. The area was revisited in 2019 when it was confirmed that all areas requiring improvement had been addressed. The area partnership is therefore anticipating an inspection visit from CQC and Ofsted in the near future. The inspection will provide the opportunity for the area partnership to

demonstrate how it is meeting the expectations contained within the area SEND inspection framework.

3.2.40 In the SEND area inspection framework, a local area self-evaluation (SEF) describes the impact of local area practice and sets out plans to ensure continued service improvement. It is important for each local SEND partnership to have a regularly reviewed and updated SEF for SEND services. The SEF and supporting action plan will not only be requested ahead of a full inspection as previously, but it will also be required for new annual engagement meetings with Ofsted and CQC and for any monitoring activity. This means that Brent SEND partnership needs to have a current SEF and action plan in place. The Brent SEF was last completed in January 2024 and will be kept under review pending notification of an inspection. Brent's last annual engagement meeting with Ofsted took place in February 2024.

3.2.41 Three key questions for the local area partnership are to be covered in the SEF:

- a) *What do you know about the impact of your arrangements for children and young people with SEND?*
- b) *How do you know what impact your arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having?*
- c) *What are your plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?*

High Needs Block (HNB) Current Position

3.2.42 At the end of 2023/24, the overall DSG deficit in Brent, which had risen due to the increasing number of children with EHCPs funded through the HNB, reduced to £13.2m, following an in-year surplus of £0.6m. The surplus was mainly driven by underspends against the Schools, Central and Early Years Blocks of the DSG offsetting a £1.4m overspend against the HNB. The Early Years Block underspend was mainly due to the DfE's in-year adjustment to the EY Block funding in July 2023, following the completion of the January 2023 census. The EY Block is a self-contained block based on headcount and therefore there is a risk that the DfE may claw back the funding following a final in-year adjustment expected in July 2024.

3.2.43 There was an increase in the number of children requiring EHCPs which was 3,576 as at March 2024 compared to 3,309 as at March 2023, an increase of 8.1%. This led to a £1.4m pressure against the HNB mainly linked to an increase in the top-up funding for in-borough mainstream academies and special schools, placements in independent day special schools and alternative education for children awaiting placements as well as the post-16 provision.

Table 1	HNB Funding £m	Recoupment £m	Total HNB Funding after recoupment £m	Year on year % Increases	HNB Overspend £m	Overall DSG (Surplus)/ Deficits £m
2024/25	85.0	(9.3)	75.7	3%		
2023/24	82.2	(8.8)	73.4	10%	1.4	1.4
2022/23	74.7	(8.2)	66.5	13%	(0.3)	(0.3)
2021/22	66.4	(7.6)	58.8	10%	5.3	4.6
2020/21	60.4	(7.4)	53.0	7%	6.2	5.6
2019/20	56.3	(7.2)	49.1		3.8	4.9

HNB Cumulative Deficit:	16.2
DSG Other Blocks Surplus 23/24:	(3.0)
Overall DSG Cumulative deficit:	13.2

- 3.2.44 Table 1 above shows the funding allocated to the HNB of the DSG increasing over the period 2019/20 to 2024/25. On average, the funding gap had been in the region of c£5m per annum and this had created a year-on-year deficit of £15.1m by 2021/22. There has been significant investment against the HNB to mitigate further pressures.
- 3.2.45 Local authorities with deficits are expected to have in place a Management Plan to mitigate their deficit balances. Brent's Deficit Recovery Management Plan includes longer-term actions to recover the deficit and regular updates on progress are presented at Schools Forum. The plan includes a combination of recovery actions including managing demand by applying a graduated approach to reduce the need for an EHCP, improving sufficiency of places by establishing more SEND provision in the borough, improved financial management and anticipated government funding increases expected to mitigate the deficit. The risk remains that the number of EHCPs will continue to rise.
- 3.2.46 The management plan is updated as part of the budget monitoring process and presented at 2 out of the 4 Schools Forum meetings each academic year. Table 2 below summarises the indicative cost avoidance of the actions identified in this report where quantifiable.

Table 2	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Indicative Cost Avoidance	£0	£0	£0
In year Forecast (Deficit)/Surplus *Unmitigated* forecast	(2,494)	(6,399)	(10,533)
Managing Demand			
- EHC Plans ceased to maintain	400	400	400
- Impact of the Graduated Approach	193	208	223
Improving Sufficiency of places			
- New secondary special school	465	598	701
- ARPs and Special school expansion	1,042	1,664	993
- Alternative Provision			110
- Post 16 skills resource centre			100
Financial Management			
- Realign DSG funded SEN support services			
- 5% Administrative charges	77	82	87
Total Indicative cost avoidance	2,176	2,953	2,614
Net Revised Forecast	(318)	(3,446)	(7,919)
Cumulative Forecast Deficit 2024/25 – 2026/27:			(11,684)
Carried Forward DSG deficit 2023/24:			(13,257)
Forecast Cumulative Deficit 2026/27:			(24,941)

- 3.2.47 The increase in SEND places in borough will lead to a reduction in out-of-borough placements and placements in independent non-maintained special schools.
- 3.2.48 With regards to financial management a lens has been placed on how funding from the HNB is used, including a review of areas that should be funded through other means such as the council's general fund account. In addition to this, the Children's Trust will receive a report on the health needs offer between the ICP, Public Health and the CYP Inclusion Service to confirm the jointly commissioned system wide approach to meeting needs.
- 3.2.49 Part of the management plan includes increased income from a 0.5% transfer (£1.3m) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. This was approved by the Schools Forum to support the HNB in 2024/25 and it is assumed that this request will continue in future financial years to support the pressures in the HNB.
- 3.2.50 Brent Council, as other local authorities, continues to lobby central government for funding increases, which properly match the levels of need via the Society of London Treasurers (SLT) and London Councils, with the Deputy Leader of the Council actively engaged in the lobbying process.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The Lead Member for Children, Young People and Schools is regularly updated on matters related to SEND services.
- 4.2 Sections 3.3.12 to 3.3.33 include examples of stakeholder engagement, including Brent Parent Carer Forum, parents and children and young people to inform service developments.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 Nationally the pressures against the HNB have led to local authorities accumulating deficits of about c£3.2bn as at June 2024. The School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2021 agreed a statutory override which enabled local authorities to carry forward any cumulative DSG deficit to be held in a separate reserve. This arrangement was due to end in 2022/23, but the previous government extended the arrangement for another three financial years from 2023/24 to 2025/26. It is not yet clear whether the current government will further extend the override.
- 5.2 As reflected in Table 2 above, the current Brent Management Plan assumes that the deficit is likely to grow with the unmitigated forecast reflecting a funding gap leading to a pressure of £0.318m in 2024/25 and £24.9m by 2026/27. This modelling is based on DfE guidelines with a rate of growth in HNB funding of 3% in 2025/26 and in 2026/27. The 3% funding increase in 2024/25 was the lowest increase the HNB had received compared to previous years and was significantly lower than the cost of inflation. The increase has not been sufficient to accommodate the inflationary pressures that schools and independent non maintained special schools have been facing.
- 5.3 The Management Plan also assumes an average 8% growth in the number of EHCPs in 2025/26 with a 1% reduction in future years, a 6% increase in the costs for placements made in Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools and a 6% increase in staffing costs for 2025/26 with a 1% reduction in future years.

- 5.4 The working assumption is that the indicative cost avoidance in Table 2, which ranges from £2.176m in 2024/25 to £2.614m in 2026/27 would reduce the funding gap, and that if the Schools Forum/Secretary of State continues to agree a 0.5% Schools Block transfer which equates to c£3.9m over three years, the gap would reduce further. However, this will not be enough to secure a balanced in year position and the mitigated cumulative deficit would grow to £24.9m. The potential cost avoidance arising from the DBV programme of £2.1m, will reduce the deficit further to £22.8m.

In summary, if the number of children and young people with EHCPs, which is the main cost driver of the deficit, continues to grow and additional HNB funding is not provided in line with the growth and inflationary pressures, the deficit will increase. Also, if the historic deficit is not cleared by 2025/26, there may be a risk to the Council's General Fund balances.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The Department for Education (DfE) leads the SEND system for England and defines the legislative, policy and funding arrangements. The DfE's vision is of "children and young people with SEND achieving well in their early years, at school and in college; finding employment; leading happy and fulfilled lives; and having choice and control over their support." (DfE 2015b). The current arrangements for the education and care of children and young people with SEND are governed by the Children and Families Act (2014). Part 3 of this requires local authorities, schools and academies, early years providers and NHS bodies to pay regard to the regulations and to the statutory Code of Practice for SEND (DfE 2015a). Duties in the Children and Families Act (2014) include:

- To work across the local authority and health to jointly commission services that deliver integrated support for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25, including arrangements that support personalisation and personal budgets.
- For the local authority to work with local partners, parents and young people to co-produce and publish a Local Offer of SEND services and to assist young people in finding employment, obtaining accommodation and participating in society.
- For the local authority to provide co-ordinated education, health and care needs assessments for children and young people aged 0 - 25 and issue education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- For NHS clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to put in place mechanisms to ensure practitioners and clinicians can support the integrated EHC needs assessment process.

- 6.2 The Care Act (2014) sets out duties local authorities and CCGs must fulfil for children and young people with disabilities and their families, including direct payments and supporting transitions to adult care services. The Government holds the local SEND system to account through Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who have been tasked to carry out evaluations of local areas in England and their support for children and young people with SEND. Inspection teams assess the effectiveness of the local organisations in identifying and meeting the needs of all children and young people with SEND from ages 0 to 25 (Ofsted 2016).

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Pursuant to s149 of the Equality Act 2010 (otherwise known as the Public Sector Equality Duty). The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

7.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This paper demonstrates activity that positively supports the Council and the local area partnership in meeting this Public Sector Duty and actions that aim to ensure anti-discriminatory practices are in place.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 The SEND Strategy 2021-2025 supports children and young people to remain in their local communities and engage positively within their communities. Expanding SEND provision in Brent will reduce travel to schools out of the borough and as a result will have a positive impact on the carbon footprint. The development of Welsh Harp as an environmental education centre supports the Council's climate change strategy.

8.2 Brent's support for Independent Travel Training as part of the new Transport Policy (approved by Cabinet in June 2024) should serve to increase the use of public transport by children and young people with SEND in Brent, thus reducing emissions resulting from reliance on taxis.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 Clarity on the duties arising from any new legislation will indicate the impact on human resources.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 Reports on the readiness of the local area SEND Partnership are regularly shared with Cabinet, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Executive of the ICP and Brent Children's Trust Board.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director Children and Young People

BRENT SEND STRATEGY 2021-2025

We want our children and young people to be able to:

**'Dream big, achieve well,
have choice, control, and lead
happy fulfilled lives'**

Page 43



INTRODUCTION

Brent Children's Trust has developed a vision for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), co-created by parents, carers and those who work with them across the partnership. It is:

Page 44

'To ensure that all children and their families have the fullest possible range of support and opportunities available to them in order to improve their life chances and realise their aspirations.'

This vision has never been as important in bringing together all relevant partners, including parents and carers, schools and settings, health providers, commissioners and the local authority to respond to the challenges resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic. The extent to which education, health and care providers in Brent rose to these challenges to meet children and young people's needs was key in helping promote good outcomes. The commitment to school attendance of children and young people with SEND resulted in above national average attendance and where this was not possible, children and young people received good quality remote learning support. Therapeutic services worked hard to ensure continuity of support for children and partners working with clinically vulnerable children met to oversee an effective multiagency response.

This refreshed Brent SEND Strategy sets the route to recovery, building on existing good practice and addressing those areas where services need to be strengthened. This includes:

- improved access to and experience of therapeutic, mental health, and physical health services;
- reinforcing the role the three SEN early years centres have in supporting all children to access an integrated 2.5 year old check;
- supporting more children and young people

to attend an inclusive setting or school in Brent where needs are met earlier;

- and broadening access to a wide range of short breaks and local community activities.

The following set of priorities has been shaped into a clear set of actions co-produced with young person advisers, parents and carers (via the Brent Parent Carer Forum), and Children's Trust partners. The priorities directly respond to the ambitions for children in Brent identified through the consultation undertaken between January and May 2021, involving over 500 children, young people, their parents and carers and those who support young people.

The four preparation for adulthood outcomes outlined in the Code of Practice 2015 were used as headings in the consultation and form the framework for this strategy. This approach will encourage a smoother pathway into adulthood and enable young people to build on life skills and support their aspirations:

1. Education, employment and training
2. To live a healthy lifestyle
3. To be fully active citizens of Brent.
4. To live independently

In addition a further priority, 'My Brent' was included. The voice of young people has been clear. This is their borough. They want their voices to be heard in shaping the Brent of the future.

This strategy is informed by related key national documents such as the SEND Code of Practice (2015), National Autism Strategy (2021), the National Disability Strategy (2021) and the NHS Long Term Plan. It also takes account of national advocacy campaigns that promote the rights of disabled people.

- The Brent Borough Plan 2018-2023
- Brent Black Community Action Plan 2020
- The Brent Poverty Commission Report 2020 particularly in relation to education, employment and training opportunities for disabled people.
- The Brent Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021
- The Brent Youth Strategy 2021
- Expectations of Ofsted/CQC following 2019 joint local area SEND revisit
- Priorities identified by the Integrated Care Partnership

The actions identified in this Strategy, under 'We Will' are an expression of the commitments that the Children's Trust has made to children and young people with SEND in Brent.

Through these commitments we will offer opportunities for children and young people with SEND to live, learn and work with others of all abilities in an atmosphere of mutual care and respect.



Gail Tolley
Strategic Director (CYP)



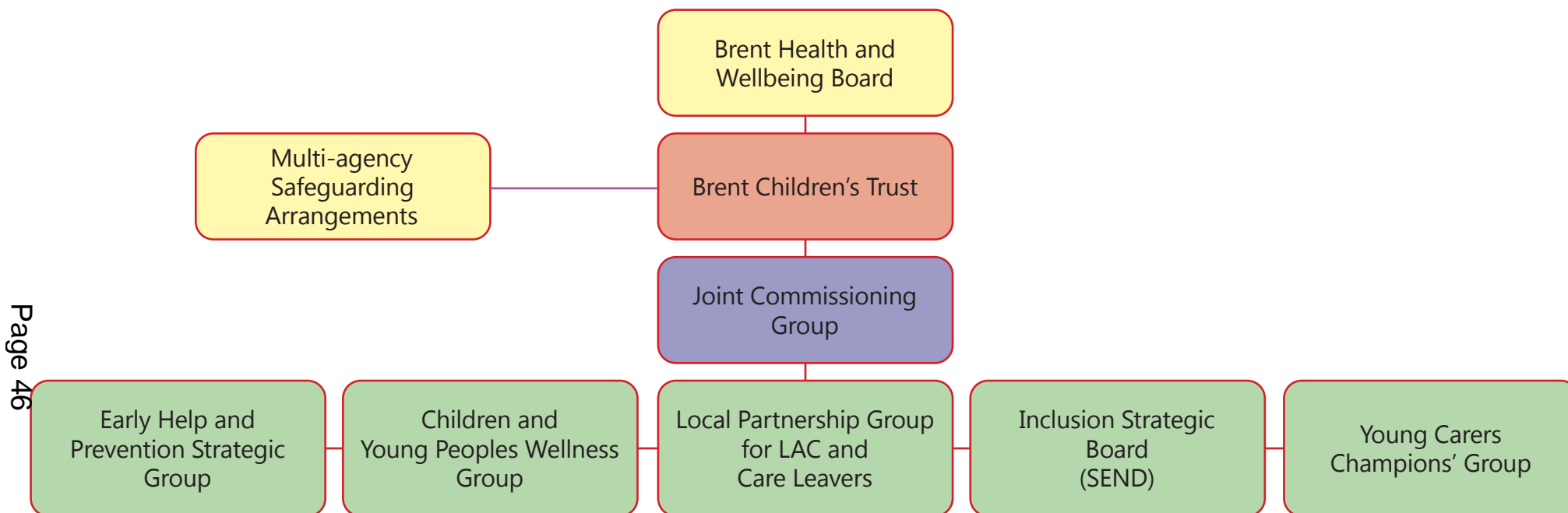
Robyn Doran
Brent Integrated Care
Partnership Director



Amytia Puspawresti
Chair BPCF

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

BRENT SEND GOVERNANCE



The above diagram details the strategic leadership and accountability framework for the implementation of the SEND Code of Practice 2015. The Brent Health and Wellbeing Board is the forum that provides accountability, scrutiny and leadership across the health, public health and social care system. The Board discharges its duties under the Code of Practice via the Children's Trust.

To deliver the vision, Brent Children's Trust is

committed to the following principles:

- Putting children and young people and their families at the heart of service design and delivery ensuring a person-centred approach
- Enabling children and young people and their families to only have to tell their story once and be able to rely on long-term relationships with professionals who work seamlessly together
- Breaking down the cultural and structural divisions between agencies in the interest of improving outcomes for children and young people
- Working together to jointly identify, plan, change and improve
- Improving outcomes and life chances for children and young people with SEND.

Brent SEND Strategy 2018-21: How did we do?

Priority 1: Ensure early intervention at all ages and support for children, young people and families to prevent escalation to more specialist services

The 2019 Ofsted/CQC joint local area SEND revisit evidenced good progress had been made to 'fully embrace the spirit of the SEND reforms and (partners had) worked together in partnership to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND in Brent.'

Page 47
Targeted support both in the early years and in universal services is in place to identify and meet a wide range of needs as early as possible. This includes an early years' intervention programme that has supported children of nursery age to access early specialist support. This includes speech, language and communication support.

Family Wellbeing Centres (FWC) were established in December 2020 to provide multidisciplinary support and drop in for children and young people and their families. This includes accessing hearing and visual services, therapy and pre-diagnostic ASD support for young people with SEND. One FWC was designated a specialist SEND hub to co-ordinate services effectively.

Additionally, pilot mental health support teams in schools have been established (2020), an online counselling service provided as well as interventions to support children and young people with low mood and anxiety needs

Priority 2: Provide integrated and coordinated multiagency services so that families and young people only have to tell their story once.

The 2019 Ofsted/CQC joint local area SEND revisit evidenced that leaders from the CCG had strengthened their engagement at a strategic level, '...successfully improving a variety of services and processes for children and young people with SEND.' Clinic sessions were established in 2019 to ensure children and young people were provided with the opportunity of a 'one-stop' appointment. These appointments offer testing and more specialist interventions, reducing the need for repeat visits and increasing the continuity of care provided.

A focus has been on implementing a person centred planning approach across agencies to education, health and care plans, ensuring they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely, demonstrating that they make a difference to children's outcomes.

Health partners' engagement in schools has been strengthened. There is a robust multiagency process for supporting young



people with learning disabilities and ASD to remain in the community.

A Disabled Children and Young People's Service (0-25) was created in 2018 in order to ensure that social care needs were considered for the whole period of childhood and early adulthood.

Families are supported by specialist teams, such as the Council's Brent Outreach Autism Team (BOAT), Early Years Intervention Team, Disabled Children and Young People's Service (0-25).

BOAT have been a great support network for me and my family throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Support for us has meant everything! So thank you, for the lasting effect on the wellbeing of our children, which is most important.' (Parent of 2 children with autism at mainstream schools, one in primary and one in secondary)

Priority 3: Make provision of the highest possible quality through effective joint commissioning so that children and young people with SEND can have their needs met locally wherever possible

The 2019 Ofsted/CQC joint local area SEND revisit evidenced that 'Local area leaders have an accurate view of the quality of services

provided. They implement a systematic approach to joint commissioning when contracts come up for renewal or when the need for new services is identified. Having prioritised areas for improvement, local area leaders ensure that all commissioning arrangements are conducted jointly. Responsibility for the outcomes of these arrangements is shared between the local authority and health providers'.

The revisit found evidence that joint arrangements were in place for paediatric therapies including occupational therapy (OT), speech and language therapy (SALT) and mental health and well-being services and that local area leaders have strengthened governance arrangements. 'Everybody knows who leads each aspect of the work because leaders have established clear lines of accountability. This ensures that no group of children falls through the net'.

Priority 4: Ensure the participation of parents, carers and children and young people in the design and delivery of services.

The 2019 Ofsted/CQC joint local area SEND revisit evidenced that '...a culture of joint partnership with parents has been established and embedded. Steering group members work as equal partners to improve provision and outcomes for children and young people



with SEND in Brent. Leaders now routinely involve parents from the earliest stage when redesigning or creating services and make sure that their views are considered, and their contribution included. Parents have become an integral part of the local area team supporting families in Brent’.

The Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) is an integral member of the strategic partnership group that sets the direction of travel for how we work in the borough. The commitment to inclusion of the parental voice is also evidenced in parent/carer participation in the selection of senior local authority staff responsible for SEND services.

The BPCF has continued to go from strength to strength. It now has over 400 members, a team of parent champions who promote parental participation for parents/carers of children with an education, health and care plan and those being supported at SEN support as part of a successful wellbeing programme. They have held over 20 ‘Big Conversations’ and workshops with clinicians, therapists, teachers and care staff discussing key issues with parents and carers. Some of the feedback from these sessions include:

‘Thank you for putting on such a helpful workshops, I feel much better informed and it was really nice to meet the faces

connected to the services.’ (Parent)

‘We feel so supported and listened to.’ (Parent)

‘It was so nice to be rang up and asked how we were managing.’ (Parent who was called by a Parent Champion)

Progress in ensuring consistent and regular engagement of children and young people has been slower, however in preparing this new Strategy the most significant leaders in the conversation have been young people and also in establishing a new young person advisers network.

Priority 5: Improve outcomes and life chances for children and young people with SEND to enable greater independence and transition into adulthood

All Brent Special Schools are good or outstanding and this was further demonstrated by the recognition schools received for the curriculum delivered during the pandemic. Staff developed new ways of working both in school and online to enable all pupils to access learning. Parents were given online support and training to support their children and families were enabled to access play and recreational facilities to ensure everybody was able to have exercise and fun sessions. Parents found the ongoing home/school

liaison via phone calls, home visits and Zoom calls highly valuable and all pupils accessed in school provision; either full time or part time depending on need/parental preference. All pupils were provided with IT and a variety of equipment/learning packs etc. The DfE identified practice at the Avenue School as being highly effective and used their approach as an example of exemplary practice.

The focus for increased inclusion and improved outcomes in mainstream schools has demonstrated impact. At Key Stage 2, in 2019 (1) Brent pupils with SEND attained the expected standard in reading and writing, with mathematics rising by three percentage points to 26%, above the national average for pupils with SEND (22%). At Key stage 4 in 2019 the Brent average Attainment 8 score for students with SEND (28.1) was above the national average for students with SEND (27.5). For the Progress 8 measure Brent students made more progress at secondary school than students with SEND nationally.

At one primary school the concept of inclusion as a whole school approach is expressed by all children being introduced to sign language techniques from Reception. Special schools and a dedicated SEN outreach team work alongside mainstream colleagues to ensure effective inclusion and teaching and learning

strategies, thereby improving outcomes.

For young adults a comprehensive supported internship scheme with partner colleges, training providers, employers and Brent Works has led to an increase in meaningful employment pathways.

The 2021 Brent SEND situation

A range of information is used to measure how the needs of children and young people with SEND are being met as well as how effective the partnership is working together. The figures below provide key highlights from performance information available to the SEND partners. This data provides local and national benchmarks and enables the Children's Trust to measure progress against the priorities within this Strategy and to hold partners to account. The most recent full year data demonstrated a significant increase in the number of EHCPs, growing by 14.8% (national 10.4%) during the 2020 calendar year (2), with an annual growth rate of 8.4% since 2017. To ensure earlier intervention, preventing the need for an EHCP in some cases, a key priority is to roll out a strengthened graduated approach in schools and settings.

There is a lower rate of Brent pupils needing special educational need (SEN) support (10.7%, compared to the national average of 12.2%). The most common category of need identified in the School Census 2021 at SEN support was



for speech, language and communication with 29% of pupils identified with this need in Brent compared to 22% nationally. A key strategic priority is to ensure special educational needs can be met earlier, through the graduated approach with a clear whole borough strategy for identifying and addressing communication and interaction needs earlier.

The most common type of primary need for children with an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan is Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This is also the same as the national position, although in Brent ASD is the most common type of need, accounting for 42.9% of Brent's EHC Plan population compared to 30.5% in England. Through this strategy we will work with parents and carers, education settings, and specialist health providers to understand why this rate is much higher than the national average and consider if the Brent pathway requires amendment.

During 2020 Brent SEND partners responded well to meeting the timeliness target of issuing an EHC Plan, with 80.3% completed in 20 weeks compared to 58% nationally. Brent, as with most local authorities in England, had a lower rate of completions in time compared to 2019, primarily due to the delays in assessments as a consequence of the pandemic but also due to a greater focus on the quality and impact of the assessments. We will continue the focus on quality

ensuring EHC Plans make a positive difference to children and young people's outcomes.

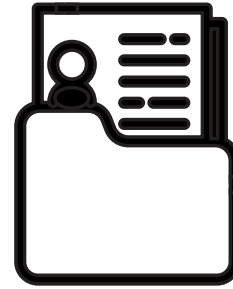
The majority of children and young people with a newly issued EHC Plan in 2020 attended mainstream settings at the point of issue, however compared to national figures Brent has more children attending a special school (23% more as compared to statistical neighbours) as opposed to a mainstream provision and also out of borough provision. Brent has also a third fewer children and young people attending alternative provision as opposed to national figures. As a consequence a significant capital programme is planned to ensure that more children and young people with SEND in Brent can access a local school and therefore be part of local communities. A focus on improving opportunities for young people over the age of 16 is also a priority within this strategy, ensuring there are greater meaningful education and employment opportunities.

In response to the pandemic, education setting staff developed new ways of working both in school and online to enable all pupils to access learning. Parents were given online support and training to support their children and families were enabled to access play and recreational facilities to ensure everybody was able to have exercise and fun sessions. Parents found the ongoing home/school liaison via phone calls, home visits and Zoom calls highly valuable and

all pupils accessed in school provision; either full time or part time depending on need/parental preference. All pupils were provided with IT and a variety of equipment/learning packs etc. The DfE identified practice at the Avenue School as being highly effective and used their approach as an example of exemplary practice.



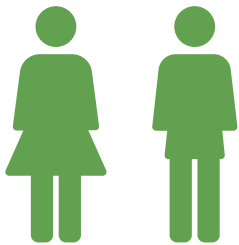
Brent schools report a lower rate of pupils needing special educational need (SEN) support (10.7%) compared to the national average of 12.2%, but a slightly higher rate of pupils on an EHC Plan 3.9% compared to 3.7%.



In 2020-21 Brent children without an EHC Plan accessing speech and language therapy averaged 1438 sessions per quarter and Children's SALT new referrals seen within 8 weeks, averaged 95%, per quarter.



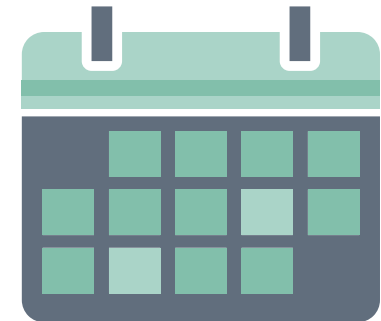
In 2020-21 55% of children and young people accessing specialist CAMHS referral services received treatment within the 18 weeks' target.



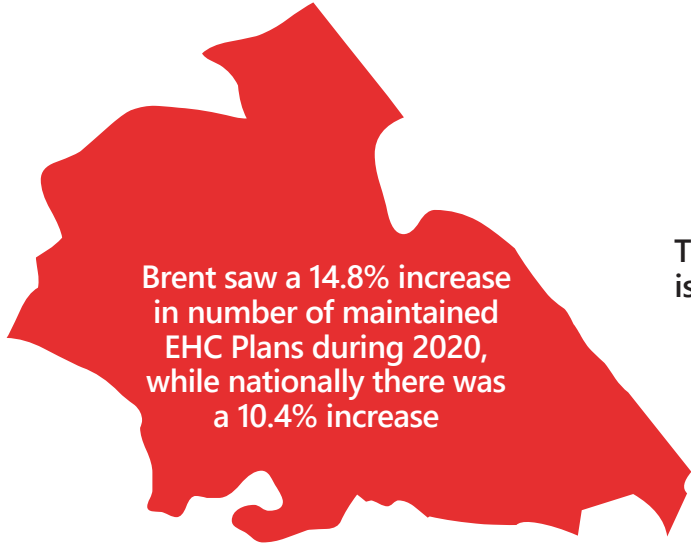
Brent have a higher number of children at SEN support identified with speech, language and communication needs as compared to national. (29% compared to 22%)



Those waiting under the target of 26 weeks for a Social and Communication Assessment averaged 67% in 2020-2021.



In 2020, excluding exceptions, 80.3% of new EHC Plans were issued within 20 weeks, well above the national average.



Brent saw a 14.8% increase in number of maintained EHC Plans during 2020, while nationally there was a 10.4% increase

40.4%

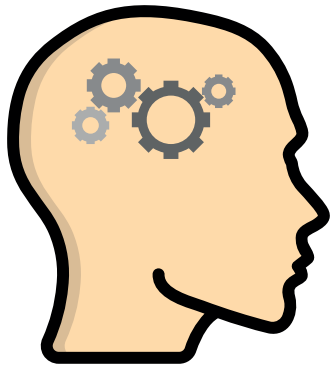
The highest number of EHC Plans in Brent is within the 5 – 10 age group, 1124 pupils, which makes up 40.4% of the cohort.



10.6% (105) of all Fixed Term exclusions from Brent schools in 2020/21 and 9.1% (2) Permanent exclusions were of EHC Plan pupils.



19.9% of Brent's EHC Plan cohort are open to Children's Social Care; 18.1% are CiN; 1.1% are Looked After Children and 0.7% are supported by a Child Protection Plan‡.



Children and young people with ASD account for 42.9% of Brent's EHC Plan cohort compared to 30.5% in England.



9.2% of young people known to Brent's Youth Offending Service have an EHC Plan (50), 11.4% are SEN Support (62)††.



During the January-March 2021 national lockdown average attendance for EHC Plan pupils in Brent was 82.1% compared to the national average attendance of 53.3%.

SEND PRIORITIES 2021-2025

EDUCATION TRAINING EMPLOYMENT

Young people have said:

- I like my teachers and I like to learn.
- I do not like getting in trouble at school or being bullied.
- I want to progress from school to college and from college to university.
- I want a 'good' job, to be 'successful' and 'have money'.
- They are interested in a range of occupations including being a theatre worker, photographer, IT engineer, train driver, builder, aircraft engineer, youtuber, doctor, police officer, dentist, primary school teaching assistant, chef, hair & beauty stylist, receptionist, working outside with vegetables and plants, shop assistant.



Parents, Carers and those supporting young people want children and young people:

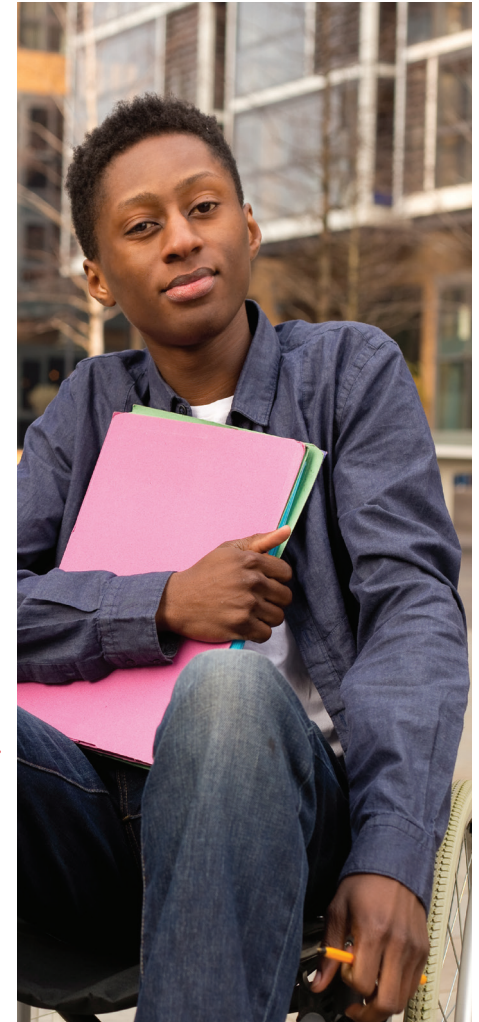
- To get a job and 'contribute to society'.
- To have more supported pathways to access higher education and university.
- To have a full and enriched life where they can live independently and work in their chosen profession
- To receive support from fully qualified staff to look after and care for vulnerable children while in their education setting.
- To have more specialist school provision.
- To know that employers must be more understanding and aware of SEND needs.
- To be aware of their employee rights and where to access help if needed.

We will provide all children and young people with the opportunity to realise their aspirations through:

- Supporting every Brent school and setting to be inclusive.
- Supporting improved educational outcomes for children and young people through increasing specialist SEND teaching and learning in Brent schools and settings including colleges.
- Ensuring early identification of a special educational need.
- An online one stop shop for pathways and routes into education, employment and training.
- Access to a skills resource centre where young people can be supported into meaningful employment.
- Implementing Disability Confident standards across Brent employers and service providers ensuring that employers are SEND aware and SEND friendly.

What does this mean for me?

- I can go to my local nursery, school or college and teachers will know how best to support me to achieve.
- I will be able to achieve good qualifications that help me get a good job or go to university.
- I can access information online about courses, volunteering and jobs and how to get support to access these.
- I can go to a centre that is for me and my friends to see someone who can help me get information on jobs, courses and volunteering opportunities.
- When I get a job my employers will know what it means if I have a learning difficulty or disability and can support me to be the very best I can be.



SEND PRIORITIES 2021-2025

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Young people have said:

- I enjoy physical exercise and sports. Sports that are popular include: swimming, football, basketball, dance, and martial arts.
- I enjoy cooking and going to restaurants.
- I did not like the pandemic as it has stopped me from doing the things I like.



Parents, Carers and those supporting young people have said:

- 'Being healthy' is an important aspect of young people's future.
- "There are fabulous pockets of activities. But there needs to be more of them and more visible and integrated with others."
- Brent's outdoor spaces are not SEND friendly. "Most parents of children with SEND rely on these outdoor spaces because they have no access to them at home. These places need to be maintained."
- Young people enjoy sport and physical activity. However, these facilities are not inclusive and staff need to be trained to support SEND needs.
- Mental Health support and care needs to be a priority. The waiting time for young people to be seen and diagnosed is too long e.g. CAMHS. The pandemic has exacerbated this further.
- Young people with SEND should be able to access information on healthy relationships and sex independently.

We will support young people to have healthy lifestyles by:

- Building resilience through good relationships, sex and health education in schools and settings.
- Delivering timely access to emotional health and wellbeing services.
- Having good physical health by being able to access healthcare locally.
- Developing opportunities for young people to eat healthily and to access and enjoy local restaurants.
- Providing access to good therapy and community healthcare services including sexual health.
- Promoting the Active B card so that young people can access sport and fitness opportunities in Brent.

What does this mean for me?

- I will know what a good friendship and relationship is.
- I know how to keep and manage my relationships and feelings with different groups of people including my family, teachers, employers and girlfriends or boyfriends.
- I will feel confident in making decisions about my health.
- If I am unwell, physically or emotionally, I know where to access support.
- I will be able to make healthy meals and enjoy going out to eat.
- If I want to talk to someone about relationships, I know where to go.
- I have an Active B card and use it.



SEND PRIORITIES 2021-2025

ACTIVITIES (COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION)

Young people have said:

- I like spending time with family and friends.
- I like going out to shop, museums, art galleries travelling on trains, visiting places.
- I want more facilities for disabled people.
- I don't want to be bored and feel lonely.



Parents, Carers and those supporting young people have said:

- Brent needs more local activities and "more resources put into activities for young people with SEND."
- SEND specific activities are often hard to access due to factors such as travel, accessibility and price. "Strategies for them to take part in the variety of activities that are available locally but with the extra support which they need to benefit from and be included in fully."
- More opportunities to socialise such as through "youth clubs and activities based on a young person's interests", community centres and weekend activities.
- Society needs to be more inclusive of people with SEND, for people to be 'more accepting and open' and even 'more compelled to include'.
- Staff at activity venues need to be "fully qualified" to understand SEND needs to make these venues inclusive and accessible.

We will:

- Devise 'Ten Top Tips' for being inclusive and SEND aware with young people that can be used as part of the Disability Confident Standards in Brent.
- Offer sufficient short break activities for Brent children and young people, including opportunities to socialise together and with differently abled young people.
- Establish and support Culture SEND challenge - access 25 creative and cultural experiences by the time they are 25.
- Celebrate the excellence of young people in Brent through an annual festival.

What does this mean for me?

- I know that if I go to a shop or a youth club, or leisure centre, staff who work there understand me and know how to communicate with me.
- I am able to choose from a range of activities across Brent that I am interested in.
- I can make friends at youth activities.
- I have taken the 'Cultural Challenge' and have experienced 25 different cultural activities by the time I'm 25; like going to the theatre or museums or concerts, or festivals or events across Brent or elsewhere.



SEND PRIORITIES 2021-2025

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Young people have said:

- I want to live independently with friends or have friends nearby, in the future.
- I want to live with my family in the future.
- I want to learn to drive in the future.
- I need time on my own.



Parents, Carers and those supporting young people have said:

- They want young adults to live independently/live a normal life and “achieve their goals” and “be fulfilled.”
- Provide workshops for and with parents on how to assist young people in preparing for adulthood and promoting independence.
- It is important to provide young people with the ability to learn life skills such as money management, basic self-care, cooking, booking their own doctor/dentist appointments.
- It is important that staff and schools reinforce transitions in order to reduce young peoples’ anxieties around change. This will allow young people to work toward adulthood and independence. For example, ‘develop transitions days to secondary school and post 16’.

We will:

- Create a 'Brent village', a supportive network and community for young adults to live independently including a skills resource centre that:
 - Equips young people with the skills to live independently in their own homes or with their parents.
 - Provides travel training.
 - Provides information, advice and guidance one stop shop for young people, parents and carers on housing, and available support.
 - Support parents to be aspirational about their children's level of independence.
- Enable young people to choose and control the services they receive, through personal budgets.

What does this mean for me?

- I will have a network of friends and places in the community and across Brent where I can go so I am not lonely.
- I can go to the Brent Skills Resource Centre to support me being independent whether I live alone or with my family.
- My family will be supported to support me.
- I will know how to manage my money and take care of myself.
- I feel confident to travel safely around Brent, London and anywhere I want to go.
- Being independent is not new to me; I have been learning how to deal with change and making my own decisions since I was at school.



SEND PRIORITIES 2021-2025

MY BRENT

Young people have said:

- I like living in a healthy environment, and enjoy Brent, but I do not like the pollution, traffic and noise in Brent.
- I am worried about crime and danger outside home, in the locality.
- I like Brent's open spaces and parks and would like to spend more time walking and using them, but accessing open spaces, play centres and parks is difficult.
- I want to be safe and happy in the future.
- My house is too small and I don't like sharing bedrooms with brothers and sisters.
- I enjoy travelling but don't like uneven pavements and wheelchair issues.

Parents, Carers and those supporting young people have said:

- The roads "busy and noisy" particularly on "event day" which can cause some young people distress.
- There are problems with litter and antisocial behaviour.
- "I want my child to be able to walk the streets that are safe and clean fresh breathable air instead of pollution every day."
- Housing is a challenge; "housing departments do not seem to have an understanding of how disabilities affect an individual and their immediate family members."
- "Brent should aim high and show how inclusive it can be."



We will:

- Enable our Brent young advisors and parents to engage with Children's Trust partners so they can shape the Brent of the future.
- Work to develop SEND friendly parks and town centres; wheelchair friendly environments; create safe spaces, safety messaging and skills training in how to stay safe.
- Support young people with SEND to stay in Brent through access to better quality housing.

**What does this mean for me?**

- I will be able to join the young person adviser group for Brent Council.
- I will know where I can go for help if I need it when I see this.
- I will be asked for my views and be able to change and shape services for me including:
 - Education, training and employment.
 - How to improve where I live
 - How open spaces and parks can be SEND young people friendly.
 - How to create wheelchair friendly environments and disability friendly homes.
- I will be able to access training and information on how to stay safe.
- I can get involved in the Brent Climate Assembly and share my views on pollution.



Your safety

<https://www.brentyouthzone.org.uk/support-and-advice/your-safety/>

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- All Children and young people attending Brent schools and settings (including colleges) will have timely access to the SEN support they need to achieve the best educational outcomes (via percentage of young people identified at SEN support or with an EHC Plan, education achievement data, school council feedback)

Page 64
Young people aged 16-25 are positively participating in education, employment and training (measured by reduction in NEET rate)

- Professionals will report they feel more confident in identifying SEND, have the skills to assess need and develop clear outcomes for children and young people
- All EHC Plans demonstrate that parents/carers and young people are actively engaged in the co-production of EHC plans
- EHC plans are holistic in setting out all the needs of the child/young person, and are completed within required timescales (20 weeks) and annual reviews demonstrate impact on outcomes
- Young people report they attend an inclusive educational setting in Brent (school council data)

- Young people with SEND report they have access to community activities to support them to lead independent lives (annual survey)
- The Integrated Care Partnership jointly commission therapy services for children and young people with SEND. Young people and parents report that they have timely access to therapy provision. Waiting times for access to health services are reduced and meet national guidelines
- Parents/carers report they are meaningfully participating in the design and delivery of services – “Do nothing about us without us”. (annual survey)

- Parents/carers

Underpinning the Strategy is a detailed action plan from the Children’s Trust partnership capturing key activity underway and areas that will be focused on over the lifetime of this project. The action plan specifies how impact will be measured through a combination of annual baseline performance data, key performance indicators, measured against national data wherever possible, and feedback from


children, young people and parents and carers.

The voices of children, young people and parents and carers will be captured through feedback received as part of the quality assurance of the EHC assessment, planning and review process, as well as focus group sessions with children and young people receiving both SEN support and support through an EHC Plan. An annual survey and engagement sessions in schools and settings will provide the opportunity to gather evidence of impact on the experiences of children and young people from the commitments we have made in this Strategy.

An annual report to the Children’s Trust will outline our collective achievements as well as any challenges encountered and joint solutions developed and regular updates will be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board which will be publically available.





	<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 18 September 2024</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People</p>
	<p align="center">Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools - Councillor Gwen Grahl</p>
<p>Early years provision and progress towards meeting the expansion of childcare entitlements</p>	
<p>Wards Affected:</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Key or Non-Key Decision:</p>	<p>Non-Key</p>
<p>Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small></p>	<p>Open</p>
<p>List of Appendices:</p>	<p>One Appendix 1: Governance – Childcare expansion delivery group structure Feb.24</p>
<p>Background Papers:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small></p>	<p>Palvinder Kudhail Director Early Help and Social Care Palvinder.kudhail@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Serita Kwofie Head of Early Help Serita.kwofie@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Sasi Srinivasan Early Years Manager Sasi.srinivasan@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. In the March 2023 Spring Budget, the previous government announced a significant expansion of early years childcare entitlements to take effect between April 2024 and September 2025 and proposals for development of a wraparound offer for school-aged children to access childcare between 8am and 6pm during the school term.
- 1.2. This report provides details about the rollout of these expanded entitlements in Brent, plans for distribution of the capital grant allocation provided by the DfE and the approach for delivering the requirement to have a wraparound offer for

school-aged children to access childcare between 8am and 6pm during the school term.

- 1.3. Whilst there is a reasonable level of confidence that the current changes in early years and childcare entitlements can be implemented, the position around sufficiency for the 30 hours places needed from September 2025 is less clear at this stage. Confirmations from providers indicate that they are engaging with the delivery of 15-hour entitlements across the expanded age ranges. We have systems in place to monitor provider intentions around the further expansion to 30 hours in 2025 to achieve greater clarity in the months to come. This paper sets out the current position, risks and mitigations to ensure the sector can continue to support with the delivery of the expanded entitlements.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the contents of this report relating to progress on the expansion of the entitlements and capital grant.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 The successful implementation of the expanded entitlements and wraparound offer for Brent, links to the Best Start in Life, Prosperity and Stability and the Thriving Communities priorities in the Borough Plan. There is correlation between children accessing high quality early education, not just for the development of social skills, health and wellbeing but also their readiness for school and future attainment. For parents and carers, this provides the choice of working more hours, developing their careers, or providing more for their family. As many Brent early years providers are local employers, a strong and sustainable early years sector benefits residents and the economy.
- 3.1.2 Other corporate strategies that this work links to are the School Place Planning Strategy and the SEND Strategy (2021-25).

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Free entitlements

Prior to April 2024, the free entitlement to early education and childcare was available to eligible two-year-olds, who could access 15 hours of free early education a week and all 3 and 4-year-olds who could access, at a minimum, 15 hours a week (and up to 30 hours if they are from a working family). There was no entitlement for children aged 0 – 2 years old, other than tax-free childcare for children from working families (covering the 0–11-year age range).

3.2.2 Brent childcare provision

The childcare sector is diverse within the borough, operating across the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors, as well as through maintained

provision. Provision for children before they reach statutory school age can include self-employed childminders operating from home, preschool play groups (often run by voluntary management committees), day nurseries (mainly privately run) and school-based provision. Childcare that supports school-age children (often known as ‘out of school’ or ‘wraparound’ childcare), can be offered by childminders, voluntary or private groups, and schools. In Brent, this mixed economy of 0-5 childcare provision currently sees 59% of free entitlement places delivered by the PVI sector and 41% by the maintained sector.

Figures 1 and 2 below illustrate types of provision and distribution of places across the borough:

Figure 1: 0-5 childcare providers in Brent (as at August 2024)

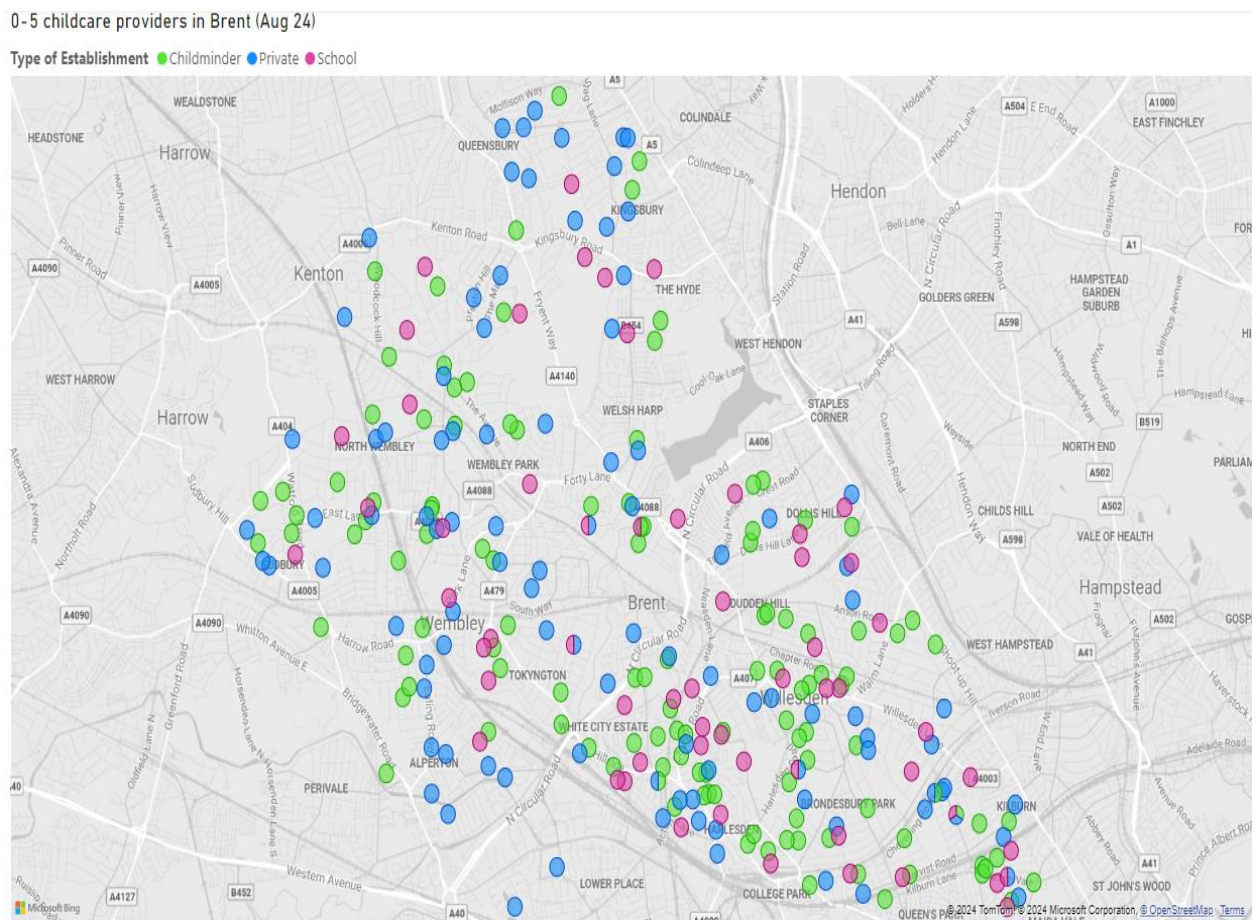


Figure 2: Registered 0-5 places by ward – August 2024

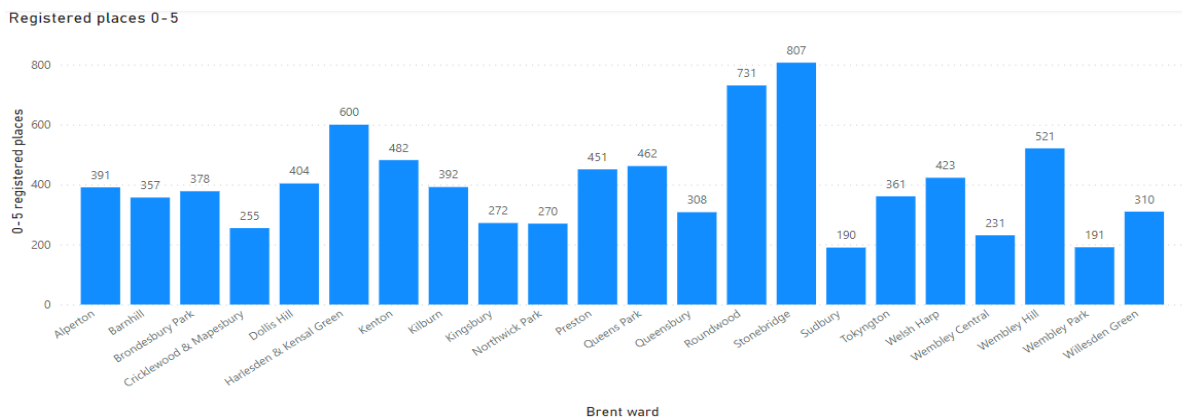
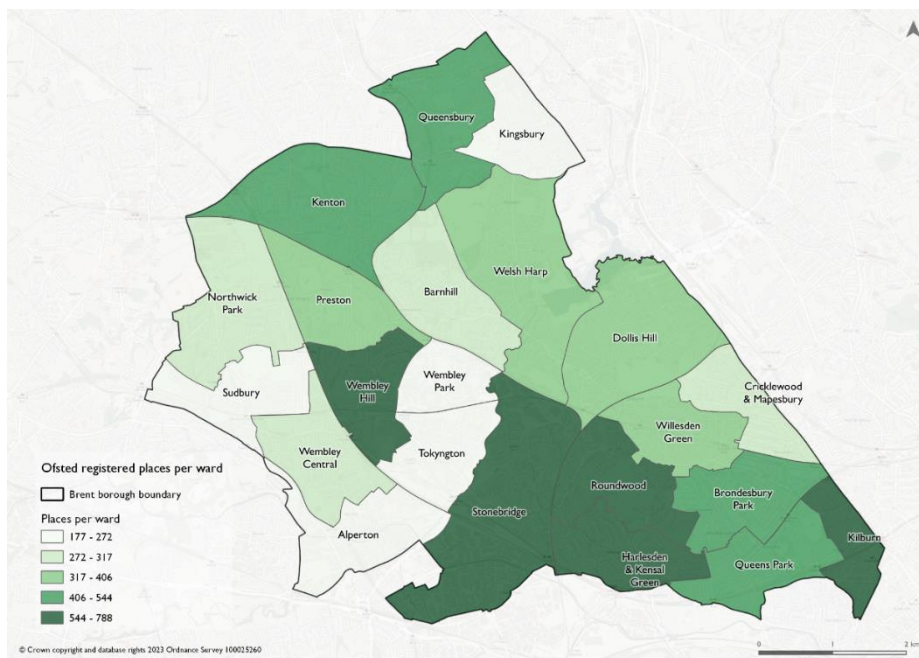


Figure 3 – Ofsted registered places per ward



As at August 2024, there were 294 Ofsted registered early years providers in the borough, including PVIs, childminders, nursery classes in schools and maintained nursery schools.

3.2.3 Role of the local authority

Councils have several statutory duties related to early childhood services. These include:

- Securing ‘early childhood services’, taking into consideration quantity and quality, for the benefit of parents, prospective parents and young children, taking ‘reasonable steps’ to involve parents, early years providers and other relevant people in those arrangements (Childcare Act 2006, s2).

- Ensuring that there is enough childcare available for every eligible child to access their funded early years entitlements for childcare (Childcare Act 2006, s7 and Childcare Act 2016, s1).
- Identifying parents in the area who might not take advantage of early childhood services that could benefit them and their children and encourage them to take these up (Childcare Act 2006, s3).
- Providing advice, information and assistance about childcare in their area, including for disabled children, and to make sure this is provided in a way that is best for those who need it (Childcare Act 2006, s12).
- Providing information, advice and training for childcare providers in their area, imposing reasonable charges for this if they wish (Childcare Act 2006, s13).

In Brent, these duties are carried out by three Early Years Teams within the Children and Young People's directorate. They manage statutory requirements relating to the free entitlements to early education for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds. They also lead efforts to secure expanded supply and take-up of good quality early learning and childcare opportunities through administration processes, sufficiency planning and partnership working with council colleagues, external partners (e.g. Health, Jobcentre Plus, the community and voluntary sector) and community members (e.g. Parent Champions).

The teams also provide a Children and Families Information Service, early years workforce development, childcare sufficiency assessments, quality improvement support, inclusion support and brokerage support to enable families to access high quality childcare that meets their needs.

3.3 Expansion of entitlements and wraparound care

- 3.3.1 In the March 2023 Spring Budget, the previous government announced proposals aimed at increasing parents' participation in the labour market, by ensuring that parents of children aged 9 months to school age and primary age children have access to early years provision and wraparound childcare in their local area. The proposals also included measures such as funding rate increases and ratio changes to allow providers to increase the number of two-year-olds that staff could care for to address longstanding provider concerns about underfunding and financial pressures.

Figure 4 sets out these proposals and related timelines:

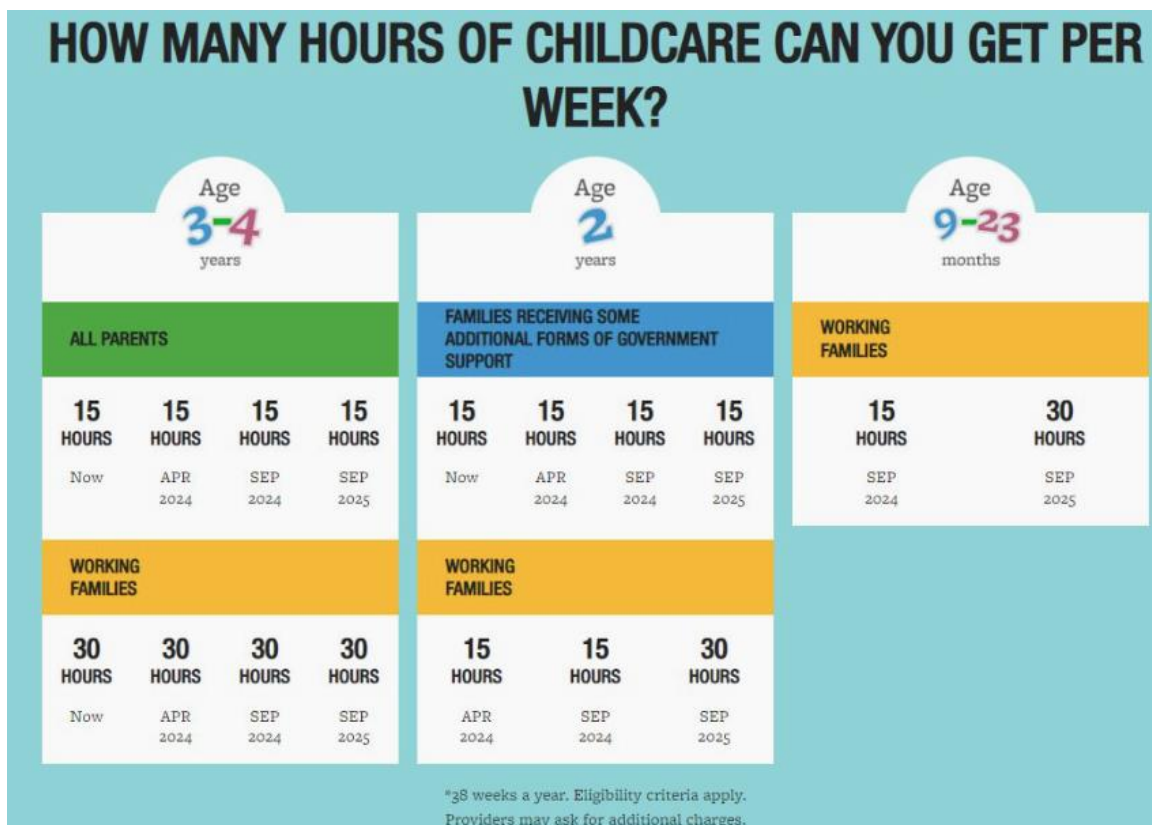
Figure 4: Timeline for implementation of new entitlements

September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in 23/24 funding rates. • Change in staff-to-child ratios for 2-year-olds, moving from 1:4 to 1:5 • Launch of start-up grants for new childminders
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15hrs funded childcare for working parents of 2-year-olds
September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or expanded wraparound provision commences nationally • 15hrs funded childcare for working parents of children 9 months to primary school age
September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30hrs funded childcare for working parents of children 9 months to primary school age
September 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parents will be able to access wraparound care, either from their school or other provider

(Funded hours are for 38 weeks of the year)

3.3.2 The above expansion of free entitlements will make these available to a much bigger cohort of families and the full range of entitlements with implementation dates are shown in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5 – Full range of entitlements with implementation dates



- 3.3.3 Following the announcement of the expansion, the council’s early years teams worked with early years providers in the borough to assess readiness and support providers to prepare for implementation. This included regular information sharing, online and face to face provider meetings as well as one to one conversations answering provider questions and addressing concerns to support their decision-making process about delivery or not of the new entitlements.
- 3.3.4 Alongside this, a communications campaign (face to face through outreach and through partners and online, including the Council’s social media channels) was rolled out to raise awareness amongst families of the new entitlements and the process for accessing these.
- 3.3.5 The first phase of the early years expansion began in April 2024 with 567 two-year-olds in working families able to take up their entitlement at Brent settings in the summer term 2024. The second phase, making the 15 free hours of free entitlement available to babies from 9 months onwards, commenced on 1 September 2024.
- 3.3.6 All early years providers who wish to offer free entitlement places are required to sign a provider agreement with the Council confirming that these places will be delivered in line with the statutory guidance relating to Early Education and Childcare. The signed provider agreements also give an indication of which of the entitlements the provider will be offering. Figure 6 below shows provider intentions as of the beginning of September 2024. Further surveys will be conducted later in 2024-2025 to ascertain provider intentions with regard to 30-hour delivery in September 2025.

Figure 6 – Provider agreements and indicative delivery

Provider type	3 and 4 universal entitlement	3&4-extended entitlement	2-year-old Low/no income families	2-year-olds in working families	9+ months in working families
PVI	100%	77%	90%	80%	60%
Childminders	97%	72%	98%	77%	74%
Maintained nursery schools	100%	25%	100%	50%	50%
Schools	80%	60%	13%	13%	2%

The above percentages are based on providers who have confirmed their delivery via return of provider agreement or MOU. Some agreements are outstanding.

- 3.3.7 Work will continue with those providers who are unsure / not yet shared their intentions to understand their challenges and provide support to address these. As expected, fewer providers have confirmed willingness to offer under-twos places, and this is frequently due to space / setup constraints. Sufficiency is

likely to be further impacted in September 2025 when current 15-hour part-time places are converted to full-time 30-hour places. The capital grant scheme is intended to address this, supporting providers to create additional under-two- and 30-hour places, as well as places in areas of low sufficiency.

- 3.3.8 In order to take up a funded working family childcare place, parents must obtain an eligibility code via HMRC in the term before they wish to access the place. Parents provide this eligibility code to their chosen provider for validation (confirmation that it is valid). The DfE has now provided local authorities with a dashboard showing both the numbers of eligibility codes issued to families and the numbers of these codes then validated with a childcare provider as the family takes up their entitlement. As at 11 September 2024 over 1293 codes had been issued for 0–2-year-olds with approximately 54% of these validated. It is anticipated that this validation figure will rise as parents and settings return from summer break and registration processes are commenced.
- 3.3.9 Follow up exercises are planned to understand why some eligibility codes have been obtained and not used. The DfE dashboard includes information on codes issued and validated by ward, and in the Autumn term it is planned to target wards with high numbers of codes validated to understand the reasons for this both via a vacancy update survey with providers to identify any sufficiency issues and an engagement exercise with parents / carers seeking their feedback. Anecdotally parents have reported applying for codes and then deciding to not use them for various reasons, including a change in circumstances, but the exercise would also aim to identify if additional charges being applied or lack of flexibility by providers is resulting in parents not accessing places that meet their needs.

3.4 The childcare expansion capital grant scheme

- 3.4.1 In November 2023, the Department for Education announced capital grant allocations to support the expansion. Funding is being provided to meet the capital costs associated with projects that help ensure sufficient places to meet the expanded early years entitlements and increasing the supply of wraparound childcare for primary-school aged children. Local authorities can determine how best to prioritise this funding.
- 3.4.2 Funding is being disbursed through a grant scheme, managed by a cross-council Capital Expansion Working Group, to which providers can apply. The first round of applications were submitted over the summer and are currently being reviewed. Quality is being prioritised and only providers with a Good or Outstanding Ofsted grading are able to apply. Brent has a total of 237 private, voluntary and independent early years providers (PVIs) and 53 schools with nursery provision can choose to deliver these entitlements. As at August 2024, 98% of childminders and 94% of PVI nurseries were good or outstanding.
- 3.4.3 Childcare projects that enable and/or increase access to childcare places for under-twos, remodel existing provision to create additional capacity for delivery of 30-hour places or offer additional capacity in areas of low sufficiency will be prioritised. Similarly, wraparound projects need to evidence the creation of new

wraparound places and/or increase access to wraparound places (where suitability of space may be a concern) or how existing provision will be adapted and improved to make them suitable for a wider range of needs.

3.4.4 In acknowledgment that the funds available in this allocation are smaller than in previous capital allocation funding rounds and to ensure that this can be spread across as many providers as possible, applicants are required to match fund the amounts that they are requesting. This amount will be capped at a maximum of £15,000.

3.4.5 This capital grant scheme is be overseen by a Childcare Expansion delivery group (see Appendix 1), reporting to the Schools Capital Programme Board and the Early Help and Prevention Board. Round 1 of the scheme just concluded with up to 7 applications approved subject to additional information being received. Providers can apply for a maximum of £15,000 which they are required to match fund. Round 2 is being launched mid-September.

3.5 Wraparound childcare

3.5.1 The proposals by the previous government were to ensure that primary school aged children can access wrap around childcare from 8am-6pm. Nationally, £289m was being made available over two academic years to enable schools and local areas to set up wraparound childcare provision. The funding period was to run from April 2024 to April 2026 with an expectation that most schools would be able to deliver wraparound childcare that was self-financing and sustainable by September 2026. The plan was to deliver this ambition by initially creating an oversupply of places to drive up demand.

3.5.2 The new government has confirmed that funding will be available for local authorities to deliver new and expanded wraparound childcare places that commence this financial year (FY24-25) and that these places will receive funding into the next financial year (FY25-26). Decisions on funding for places that are due to commence next financial year (FY25-26) will be taken as part of the upcoming Spending Review.

3.5.3 An increase in parents working from home means that demand for before/after school wraparound may not be as high as it once was. Current wraparound provision in Brent comprises breakfast and after school clubs delivered by schools themselves and by private providers, after school activities and clubs and childminders picking up from school and providing out of school care. Parents use a combination of these. There is limited evidence to indicate unmet demand in Brent. For provision delivered by and in schools, there is not always a registered number of places offered and this is determined by demand at a local level.

3.5.4 This is mirrored in survey responses from out of school providers, where a few report waiting lists, but many also report high vacancy rates. Figures 7 and 8 below show the spread of provision across the borough, and in addition to these, childminders play a significant role in providing out of school provision. A specific focus of the demand mapping will be to understand how the needs

of children with SEND are being met through the current provision and to ensure that any expansion has a focus on inclusive practice.

Figure 7 Breakfast club provider responses:
Breakfast clubs

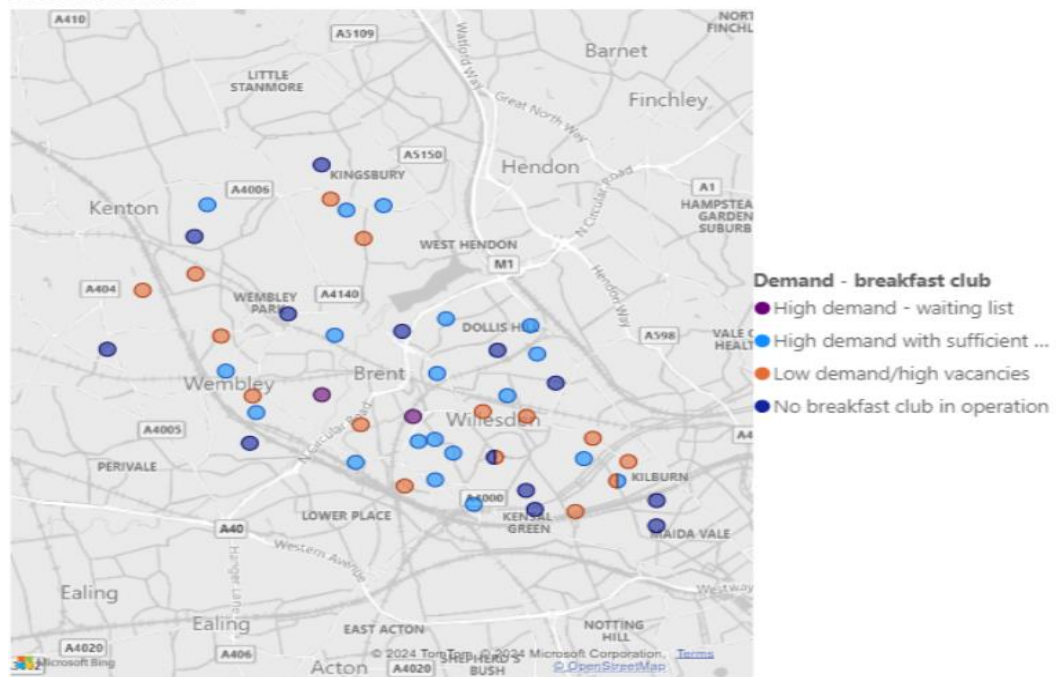
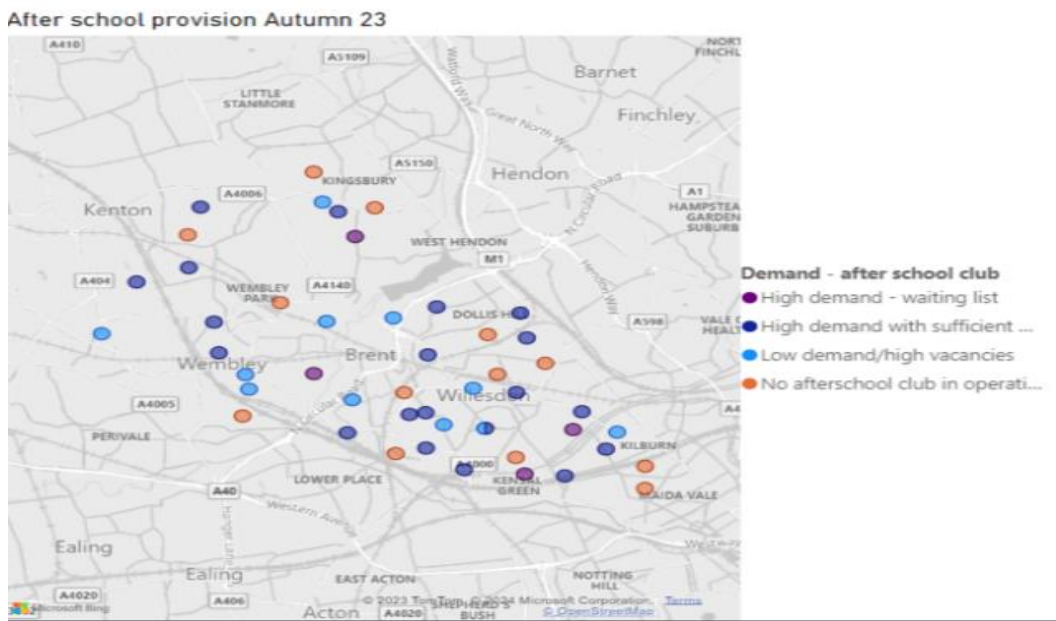


Figure 8 After school provider responses:



3.5.5 Communications and consultation with schools and private providers on the wraparound offer took place in Spring and Summer 2024, through surveys seeking feedback on delivery and intentions and online meetings with schools. Information on the expanded entitlements was also provided to raise

awareness of opportunities these may offer, in particular for schools who may be struggling with falling rolls and considering closure or reduction of their nursery provision.

- 3.5.6 A delivery plan for the wraparound expansion was submitted to DfE in June 2024 with further updates required by end of September 2024. The delivery plan proposes funding be allocated to schools as follows:

Place creation – for schools who currently offer neither breakfast nor after school provision and will create this provision (20 places per site).

Place expansion

A) Places – for schools who offer breakfast and after school provision which will be expanded to accommodate more children (waiting list currently in place) (13 places per site) including children with SEND.

B) Hours - for schools who offer breakfast and after school provision which will be expanded to meet the 8am-6pm requirement (13 places per site).

C) Provision – for schools who offer either breakfast or after school provision and will be hosting / delivering a new breakfast or after school provision to ensure provision is in place 8am-6pm (13 places per site).

Demand creation – for schools who have a full wraparound offer in place 8am-6pm with no waiting list and available spaces, who want to drive demand/encourage greater take up through innovative approaches including of children with SEND (13 places per site).

- 3.5.7 Schools will be making application for the above funding during September 2024 with funding front loaded so that schools who are able to mobilise new places in the autumn term receive the maximum allocation.

3.6 Impact of expansion on Brent's Early Years teams

- 3.6.1 The eligibility checking process for the new entitlements is managed via HMRC systems and parents apply directly through these for their eligibility codes. Alongside this however, the Brent teams are fielding an increased volume of parental enquiries relating to the new childcare entitlements and will in turn be processing a greater volume of payments. It is likely that requests for brokerage may increase as areas emerge where demand outstrips supply and this may disproportionately affect families who have children with SEND.

- 3.6.2 The expanded cohort of 0–2-year-olds accessing provision is likely to result in a proportionate increase in the children within the SEND cohort. Whilst children may not receive a diagnosis until 2+, additional needs may become apparent

before this and there is likely to be increased demand for support from the Early Years Inclusion Support team which will be monitored.

- 3.6.3 The resource to support settings to deliver quality provision may become more challenging in the face of higher demand for qualified staff, coupled with higher adult /child ratios. The impact of these changes will also be closely monitored.

3.7 Risks and mitigations

- 3.7.1 Key risks have been outlined below in Figure 9 and while for many of these, solutions lie in longer term government strategies, actions that can be taken at local level to mitigate these have been set out.

Figure 9 – Risks and mitigations

Risks	RAG	Mitigation	Timeframe
Lack of appropriately qualified early years staff due to recruitment and retention issues		Promotion of provider staff vacancies on Brent Council webpages, linking with local colleges and Jobcentre Plus to promote careers in childcare. Working with the Council's employment teams to develop strategies to address recruitment challenges locally. Supporting providers to make use of nationwide recruitment support.	Duration of the expansion programme
Shortfall in childcare places for the new entitlements		Monitor demand working with council planning teams and potential providers to enable use of available space where rising demand requires it (e.g. when entitlements expand to 30 hours).	September 2024 to September 2025
Low take-up of the new entitlements		Ensure comprehensive promotional campaign in place, using existing digital and face to face methods and partnership network to promote entitlements and the benefits to families.	Duration of the expansion programme
Negative impact of the expanded entitlements on the supply of places		Support providers in areas of high need to continue to share	Ongoing monitoring

for disadvantaged 2-year-olds		information about the demand levels for vulnerable families (i.e. in some areas there will be fewer families eligible for the new entitlements). Differentiated funding rate is being offered to providers for offering the disadvantaged two-year entitlement.	
Negative impact on availability of places for children with SEND, whereby some nurseries already have a much larger number of children of children with SEND than other nurseries within the area		Continue to follow up with providers where their current cohort does not reflect the local picture in terms of spread of SEND places, ensuring compliance with Equalities Act and thus reducing pressure on providers who currently accommodate larger numbers of children with additional needs.	Duration of the expansion programme
Wrap around childcare becomes unsustainable when funding ceases		Work with existing providers where demand outstrips supply to expand this provision. Consider locations where financially sustainable new provision can be tested.	Duration of the expansion programme
Impact on EY teams of increased cohort of children, from support and administration perspective		Ensure current vacancies are filled. Use delivery and programme funding to bring in additional capacity.	Ongoing

Figure 10 - Next steps (which will be tracked and monitored through quarterly update reports to CYP leadership team):

Actions	Timeframe
Conduct provider survey to confirm delivery intentions for new entitlement for 30 hours from September 2025	Autumn 2024
Detailed sufficiency mapping for expanded entitlements and wraparound identifying areas with surplus/deficit places based on confirmed delivery plans	Ongoing

Action plan for targeted support to early providers with implementation / unblocking barriers for those not intending to delivery	Autumn 2024
Working with schools and PVI providers to explore options for wraparound care, including identifying school sites at which demand outstrips supply and with private providers who currently operate from one (or more) schools to pilot expanding their offer to include other school sites within a local area ensuring wider reach	Autumn 2024
Explore how funding might be used to recruit/ train workforce expansion	Autumn 2024
Review and adaptation of internal systems and processes to incorporate administration of the new entitlements	Spring / Summer 2025
Information campaign to parents on all new services and entitlements available	Ongoing

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Consultation took place with early years sector representatives during the funding rate setting process. While providers have expressed disappointment in the 3- and 4-year rate (which was not within scope of the consultation), providers have been pleased with the increased two-year rates and it is hoped that this will encourage more providers to consider delivery of the new entitlements.

4.2 Wider engagement continues to take place with providers as the entitlements have been rolled out through the following:

- Newsletters
- surveys seeking feedback on intentions to deliver, barriers and support needed
- termly and exceptional online and face to face information sharing meetings

5.1 Financial Considerations

5.1.1 The capital grant allocation for Brent is £408,873 across childcare expansion and the wraparound offer, with an expected split of 80% for childcare expansion and 20% for wraparound. This payment was received on 1 February 2024.

5.1.2 This funding will be disbursed in a fair and transparent manner through a capital grant scheme as set out in section 3.4 above.

5.2 Wraparound funding

5.2.1 In addition, the borough has been allocated a further £862,698 as programme grant to deliver the wraparound programme in Brent, however, receipt of the full funding allocation is subject to the completion of the delivery plan as confirmed with the Department for Education.

5.2.2 The grant includes funding for local authority capacity as well as programme funding to deliver new and expanded wraparound childcare. Any capital works are expected to be funded through the above capital allocation. Oversight of this spend and the capital grant spend sits with the Early Help and Prevention Board and the Schools Capital Programme Board.

5.3 Early Years Block funding allocations

5.3.1 Following the consultation by the DfE in autumn 2023, a new national funding formula has been introduced for both the existing 2-year-old entitlement for disadvantaged children and the new working parent entitlements for 2-year-olds. The expansion of the early years entitlements has seen the Early Years Block 2024/25 indicative allocation increase from £24.5m in 2023/24 to £35.2m i.e., a £10.7m increase. The allocation is indicative as the DfE will only fund based on places taken up.

5.3.2 There are now separate hourly funding rates for the disadvantaged 2-year-olds entitlement, for the working family two-year entitlements; the 9-month-old up to 2-year-olds working family entitlement; and 3 and 4-year-olds for the universal and additional hours entitlements. The Early year Pupil Premium (EYPP) and the Disability Access Fund (DAF) will now extend to eligible children aged 2 and under in receipt of a free entitlement place from 2024/25.

5.3.3 Following application of the local funding formula, rates for Brent providers are set out below:

Free entitlement	Hourly base rate
Universal entitlement for 3- & 4-year-olds	£5.39
Disadvantaged two-year-old entitlement (NEG2)	£9.54
Working family two-year-old entitlement (NEW – from April 2024)	£9.41
Working family children aged 9 months up to 2 years entitlement (NEW – from September 2024)	£12.87

5.3.4 The new funding formula also confirmed that 95% pass through would apply to all existing and new entitlements and this would move from 95% to 97% as soon as the DfE deems that the roll out of the new entitlements are sufficiently progressed to allow this. This could have significant impact on the centrally retained amount that is currently used to part fund the three Early Years teams and the support offered to providers in the borough.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 Covered within the main body of the report.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Covered within the main body of the report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 The increase in economic activity envisaged by the expansion of the childcare programme may have environmental impacts such as an increase in local traffic and increased uptake of public transport.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 N/A

10.0 Communication Considerations

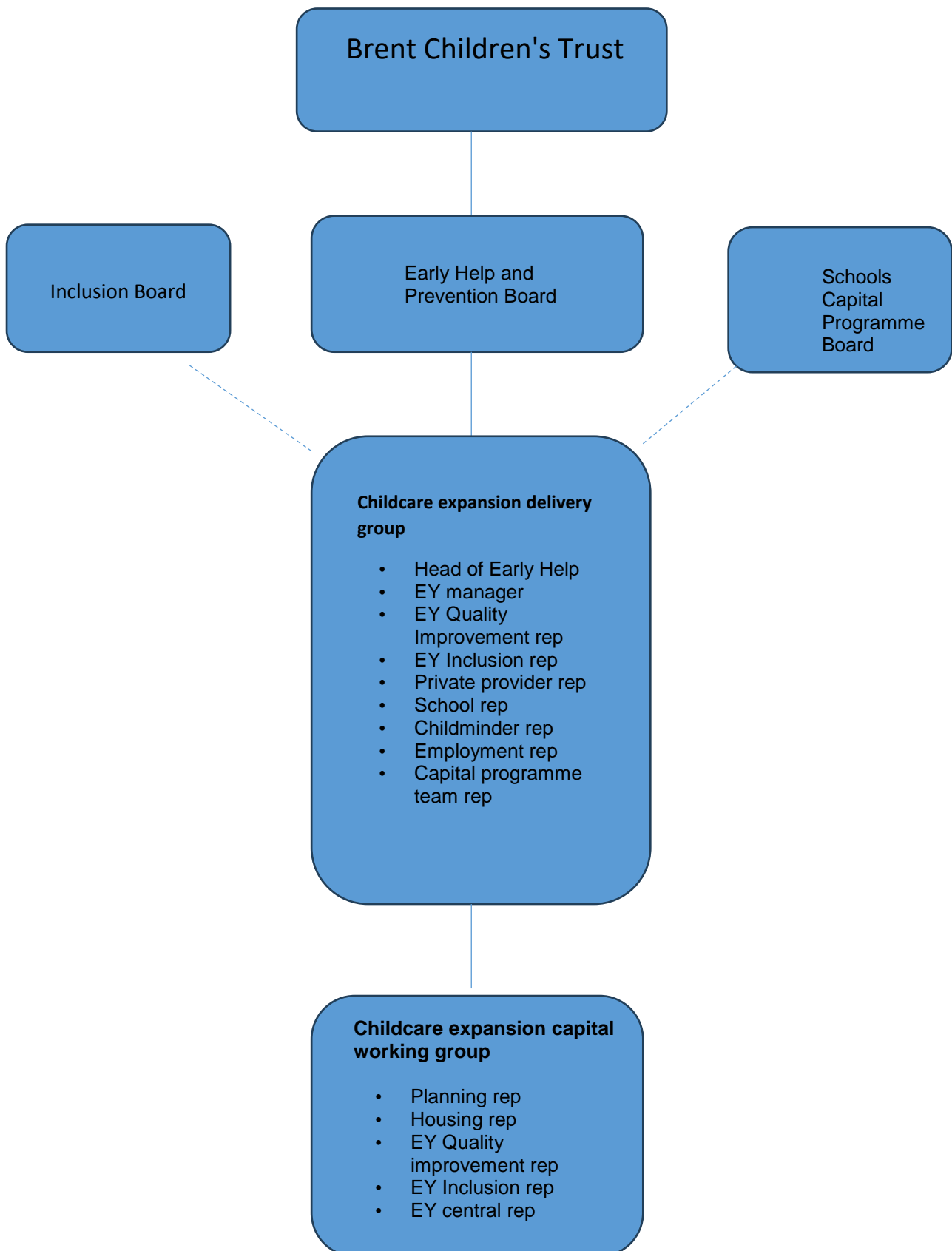
10.1 N/A.

Report sign off:


Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director of Children and Young People

**Appendix 1: Governance – childcare expansion delivery group structure
Feb.24**



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	<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 18 September 2024</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Deputy Director, Democratic Services</p>
<p align="center">Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	Two: Appendix A – Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker 2023-24 Appendix B – Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker 2024-25
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Chatan Popat Strategy Lead - Scrutiny, Democratic Services chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk Amira Nassr Deputy Director, Democratic Services amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the progress of any previous recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests of the Committee be noted (Appendix A).

3.0 Background

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The Recommendations Tracker tabled in Appendix B relates to the current municipal year (2024/25). This report also includes updates from the previous municipal year (2023/24) in Appendix A. These responses will remain on the tracker for ongoing monitoring with some further updates expected in upcoming meetings throughout the year.

3.2.2 In accordance with Part 4 of the Brent Council Constitution (Standing Orders of Committees), Brent Council scrutiny committees may make recommendations to the Full Council or the Cabinet with respect to any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive, or of any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive, or on matters which affect the borough or its inhabitants.

3.2.3 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee may not make executive decisions. Scrutiny recommendations therefore require consideration and decision by the appropriate decision maker; the Cabinet or Full Council for policy and budgetary decisions.

3.2.4 The Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker provides a summary of any scrutiny recommendations made in order to track executive decisions and implementation progress. It also includes suggestions for improvement and information requests, as captured in the minutes of the committee meetings.

3.2.5 Recommendations are removed from the tracker when they have been rejected or when implemented successfully and the review date has passed. This is the same for suggestions of improvement and information requests.

4.0 Procedure for Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees

4.1 Where scrutiny committees make recommendations to the Cabinet, these will be referred to the Cabinet (and/or relevant cabinet member) requesting an Executive Response. If relevant, the item will be published on the Council's Forward Plan.

4.2 Regarding recommendations to Full Council (e.g. in the case of policy and budgetary decisions), the same process will be followed, where a report containing the scrutiny recommendations will then be forwarded to Full Council alongside the Cabinet's responses to those recommendations.

4.3 Where scrutiny committees have powers under their terms of reference to make reports or recommendations to external decision makers (e.g. NHS bodies), the relevant external decision maker shall be notified in writing, providing them with a copy of the respective Committee's report and recommendations, and requesting a response.

5.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

6.0 Financial Considerations

6.1 There are no financial implications for the purposes of this report.

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 Section 9F, Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, *Overview and scrutiny committees: functions*, requires that Executive arrangements by a local authority must ensure that its overview and scrutiny committees have the power to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are or are not the responsibility of the executive, or on matters which affect the Authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

7.2 Section 9FE, *Duty of authority or executive to respond to overview and scrutiny committee*, requires that the authority or executive;-

(a) consider the report or recommendations,

(b) respond to the overview and scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the authority, or the executive, proposes to take,

(c) if the overview and scrutiny committee has published the report or recommendations, publish the response, within two months beginning with the date on which the authority or executive received the report or recommendations.

8.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

8.1 There are no EDI considerations for the purposes of this report.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of this report.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 There are no communication considerations for the purposes of this report.

Report sign off:

Amira Nassr

Deputy Director, Democratic Services

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Appendix A

Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (CWBSC) Scrutiny Recommendations and Information Request Tracker 2023-24

The Recommendations Tracker is a standing item on committee agendas, and documents the progress of scrutiny recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests made by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at its public meetings and as part of task and finish group reviews. Scrutiny recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests will not be removed from the tracker until full responses have been provided to the Committee by either the Cabinet, council departments, and/or external partners.

Recorded Recommendations to Cabinet from CWBSC

Meeting date and agenda item	Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Member, Lead Officer, and Department	Executive Response	Implementation Status	Review date

Recorded Recommendations to external partners from CWBSC

Meeting date and agenda item	Scrutiny Recommendation	External partner	Response	Status
5 July 2023 - Local Healthcare Resources Overview	That North West London ICB colleagues are invited for further discussions relating funding settlements for Brent in relation to North West London.	Brent ICP	Accepted. Further updates will be made available as developments are confirmed.	
	That work to address the inner and outer London pay gap is further escalated, and that	Brent ICP	Accepted. Further updates will be made available as developments are confirmed.	

	bolder solutions are utilised.			
	That the Brent Integrated Care Partnership advocates for further levelling up funding for children's mental health services in the borough.	Brent ICP	Accepted. A further update is to follow in 2024/25 once discussions have taken place.	
	That the North West London ICB commits to a timescale to address the historical underfunding compared with other North West London boroughs and to equalise levels of expenditure.	Brent ICP	Accepted. A further update is to follow in 2024/25 once discussions have taken place.	
	That a collaborative approach is taken with staff, the community and managers to co-produce solutions for retention.	Brent ICP	Accepted. A further update is to follow in 2024/25 once discussions have taken place.	
	That Brent continues to advocate for healthcare funding being allocated by need, rather than population.	Brent ICP	Accepted. A further update is to follow in 2024/25 once discussions have taken place.	
	That healthcare resources are allocated to areas of Brent with greater need and deprivation, so that more targeted work can be done in these areas.	Brent ICP	Accepted. A further update is to follow in 2024/25 once discussions have taken place.	
30 Jan 2024 –	For future reports to detail assurances that,	NHS North Central London ICB	Accepted. Further updates will be provided in 2024/25 once the final consultation has been concluded.	

NHS Start Well	as a result of the increase in demand in consolidated services, mitigations were in place against staff fatigue, human error, and overcrowding of facilities.		<p>NHS Start Well to re-visit the North Central London JHOSC in July 2024 to provide the promotion and reach report as well as a paper that outlines the emerging high-level themes from the consultation responses.</p> <p>Feedback from this meeting will be taken into considerations for the next steps in the Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC). It is not anticipated asking commissioners (North Central London Integrated Care Board and NHS England) to consider the DMBC and take a decision on whether to proceed with the proposals until December 2024 or January 2025.</p>	
30 Jan 2024 – NHS Start Well	That the impact of cost to prospective parents in relation to patient choice is considered in the final business case.	NHS North Central London ICB	<p>Accepted. Further updates will be provided in 2024/25 once the final consultation has been concluded.</p> <p>NHS Start Well to re-visit the North Central London JHOSC in July 2024 to provide the promotion and reach report as well as a paper that outlines the emerging high-level themes from the consultation responses.</p> <p>Feedback from this meeting will be taken into considerations for the next steps in the Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC). It is not anticipated asking commissioners (North Central London Integrated Care Board and NHS England) to consider the DMBC and take a decision on whether to proceed with the proposals until December 2024 or January 2025.</p>	
30 Jan 2024 – NHS Start Well	That the ICB consult a wider geographical area of residents and ensure interpretation services are available in a wide variety of languages to undertake that consultation.	NHS North Central London ICB	<p>Accepted. Further updates will be provided in 2024/25 once the final consultation has been concluded.</p> <p>NHS Start Well to re-visit the North Central London JHOSC in July 2024 to provide the promotion and reach report as well as a paper that outlines the emerging high-level themes from the consultation responses.</p> <p>Feedback from this meeting will be taken into considerations for the next steps in the Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC). It is not anticipated asking commissioners (North Central London Integrated Care Board and NHS England) to consider the DMBC and take a decision on whether to proceed with the proposals until December 2024 or January 2025.</p>	
30 Jan 2024 – NHS Start Well	That post any changes that are implemented, the ICB take a view as to the impact they have made.	NHS North Central London ICB	Accepted. Further updates will be provided in 2024/25 once the final consultation has been concluded.	

			<p>NHS Start Well to re-visit the North Central London JHOSC in July 2024 to provide the promotion and reach report as well as a paper that outlines the emerging high-level themes from the consultation responses.</p> <p>Feedback from this meeting will be taken into considerations for the next steps in the Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC). It is not anticipated asking commissioners (North Central London Integrated Care Board and NHS England) to consider the DMBC and take a decision on whether to proceed with the proposals until December 2024 or January 2025.</p>	
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Recorded suggestions for improvement from to Council departments/partners

Page 92

Meeting date and agenda item	Suggestions for improvement	Council Department/External Partner	Response	Status
5 July 2023 - Tackling Health Inequalities in Brent	That cross-council work on health inequalities is strengthened to develop a whole council approach to further addressing health inequalities.	Care, Health and Wellbeing	Senior Leadership Team session on health inequalities held. Local operational model to address health inequalities, as developed through Brent Health Matters, presented. Attention to health inequalities introduced into 24/25 Service Planning.	
	That appropriate council officers are given training on intersectionality, to further develop the organisation's understanding of intersectionality, and its impact on our residents.	Governance	Actions to address training needs is underway and discussions are taking place between the departments for arrangements and delivery.	
	That emerging neurological conditions within the community are considered for inclusion as part of Brent Health Matter's work.	Community Health and Wellbeing	BHM and public health continue to explore with communities their health concerns and tailor their work accordingly. Work on men's health including mental wellbeing and prostate cancer and on women's health issues has commenced in response to communities' priorities. Neurological condition have not emerged as a priority within the more vulnerable communities reached by BHM and public health outreach.	
5 July 2023 - Local Healthcare Resources Overview	That the proposed induction for all staff working in Brent should include attending a Brent Health Matters community event.	Community Health and Wellbeing	The BHM team have limited capacity to accommodate (and supervise for those without DBS clearance) staff attending community events to observe. It has not proved possible for provide induction opportunities for all Brent staff. However, staff joining public health and the ICP are expected to attend.	

			Invitations have been extended and taken up by senior staff in the Council and partner organisations.	
30 Jan 2024 - Brent Youth Strategy and Provision	That young people were represented as part of the Youth Strategy Steering Group. As part of this, the Committee recommended there was representation from across the sector and geographical areas in the borough so that all areas were represented.	Children and Young People	Accepted by the department. Officers will work with both internal and external partners to ensure representation is secured from all areas.	
30 Jan 2024 - Brent Youth Strategy and Provision	That officers continue to think creatively about solutions to funding of current provision.	Children and Young People	Work will continue throughout the year to ensure the best possible solutions to funding are explored to ensure the offer of the current provision.	
30 Jan 2024 - Brent Youth Strategy and Provision	To recommend that the Council communicates its communications strategy publicly so that it is widely available to young people.	Children and Young People	Accepted. Relevant strategy has been published and is available online and through Council publications.	
16 Apr 2024 – Annual School Standards and Achievements Report	To prioritise and accelerated the active enrolment programme.	Children and Young People	An update will be provided by the department during the 2024/25 municipal year. This item has been scheduled to be discussed on 28 April 2025.	
16 Apr 2024 – Annual School Standards and Achievements Report	To publicise more widely the work done between the local authority and schools to give families confidence that schools are working together with the local authority to achieve good outcomes.	Children and Young People	Accepted by the department at the meeting. Updates are provided and will be provided through various channels to ensure residents and families are well informed of the work carried out in this area.	

16 Apr 2024 – Implementation of the Brent Carer’s Strategy	That the Committee receives an update on the strategy in the next municipal year	Community Health and Wellbeing	Accepted by the department. An update on progress made will be provided to the Committee during the 2024/25 municipal year.	
16 Apr 2024 – Brent Reablement Service	That the Committee receives an update in 6 months’ time which incorporates more data.	Community Health and Wellbeing	Accepted by the department. An update on progress made will be provided to the Committee during the 2024/25 municipal year.	

Information requests from CWBSC to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Information requests	Council Department/External Partner	Response
5 July 2023 - Tackling Health Inequalities in Brent	To provide the latest data on Brent Health Matters’ co-production activity, through community engagement in the borough.	Community Health and Wellbeing	<p>1. BHM work with community organisations is measured using the ladder of participation:</p> <p>The Ladder of Participation</p> <p>The diagram illustrates the Ladder of Participation with five levels, each in an orange box:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering: Community controlled development Co-Creating: Devolving a degree of decision making to the community. Involving: Running events like workshops and charrettes to involve the community in the development Consulting: Seeking and taking account of their views. Informing: Telling the community about the plans <p>An upward-pointing arrow on the right side of the diagram is labeled "Rising citizen control".</p>

			<p>At present,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community organisations that are at empowering or partnership stage is 30 ➤ Co creating- 40 ➤ Involving- 51 ➤ Consulting- 62 ➤ Informing is 160 <p>2. Events Data: Since November 2021- July 2023, we have done 136 outreach events which were attended by 7,022 people and we carried out 5,986 health checks. We have a breakdown of people seen by other teams and the findings of health checks if you need</p> <p>3. In terms of whole council approach to tackling Health Inequalities, Our current Brent Inequalities policy is due for renewal and the group is starting in October. Public Health colleagues have asked to be part of this group so we can ensure tackling health inequalities is part of this policy. This will ensure buy in at whole council level to develop action plans</p> <p>4. In line with BHM clinical priorities, there are plans to focus BHM work in our most deprived areas mainly Harlesden, Willesden and south Kilburn</p>
5 July 2023 - Local Healthcare Resources Overview	To receive information on how outreach work in schools to promote roles in Brent's health and social care sector is aligned with the Greater London Authority's academy.	Community Health and Wellbeing Department and Brent ICP	<p>Further updates from ASC and NHS will be provided as the GLA Academies do not include public health.</p> <p>In so far as the request speaks to a general interest in how CHW are promoting roles in health and care to local young people, the public health degree apprenticeship is relevant. Now in its second year, five local young people are currently undertaking apprenticeships within public health and studying for a degree at Coventry University. Public health is working with HR to review our work experience and placement offer as we receive far more requests to join the department than we can accommodate and provide a meaningful experience.</p>
21 September 2023 – Outcome of 2023 Ofsted ILACS	For the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to receive an update on the response, improvements and	Children and Young People	A full response will be provided at a later meeting in the 2024/25 municipal year once all relevant data and updates are available.

Inspection and Current Children's Social Care Improvement Activity	outcomes made in relation to the Ofsted ILACS Inspection recommendations.		
21 September 2023 – SEND Strategy Implementation and Readiness for a Joint Ofsted / CQC Inspection	That the Committee heard directly from a member of the Harlesden cluster. Additionally, to receive a report detailing the success of the activity of the Harlesden cluster and how that was being replicated across the Borough.	Children and Young People	Accepted by the department. An update on the success of the Harlesden Cluster will be included in an update that will be provided to the Committee in the 2024/25 municipal year.
30 Jan 2024 - Brent Youth Strategy and Provision	For future reports to detail performance data so that the committee could compare how well the Council was doing in this area.	Children and Young People	Accepted by the department. Future updates to the committee will include relevant performance data and wherever available, benchmarking data.
30 Jan 2024 - Brent Youth Strategy and Provision	For future reports to be clearer about the impact of cuts and how the department mitigates against them to ensure good youth provision.	Children and Young People	Accepted by the department. Future updates to the committee will include relevant information on impacts of any further cuts and subsequent mitigation.
16 Apr 2024 – Annual School Standards and Achievements Report	To provide key performance indicator comparisons across a range of comparable boroughs	Children and Young People	Wherever possible, updated benchmarking data will be incorporated into future versions of the annual report.
16 Apr 2024 – Implementation of the Brent Carer's Strategy	To include Sri Lankan ethnic groups in the data in future reports.	Community Health and Wellbeing	Accepted by the department at the meeting. Future updates to the committee will include relevant data broken down into ethnic groups wherever possible.

Appendix B

Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (CWBSC) Scrutiny Recommendations and Information Request Tracker 2024-25

The Recommendations Tracker is a standing item on committee agendas, and documents the progress of scrutiny recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests made by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at its public meetings and as part of task and finish group reviews. Scrutiny recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests will not be removed from the tracker until full responses have been provided to the Committee by either the Cabinet, council departments, and/or external partners.

Recorded Recommendations to Cabinet from CWBSC

Meeting date and agenda item	Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Member, Lead Officer, and Department	Executive Response	Implementation Status	Review date

Recorded Recommendations to external partners from CWBSC

Meeting date and agenda item	Scrutiny Recommendation	External partner	Response	Status
30 July 2024 - Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Report (Oct 2022–Mar 2024)	To formally invite Keith Makin (Independent Chair and Scrutineer, Brent Safeguarding Children Forum) to accompany the Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to the next Brent Youth Parliament event.	Brent Safeguarding Children Forum	The Independent Chair has been liaising with the Brent Youth Parliament and will be attending their events as and when appropriate. The Chair of the CWBSC will also be joining him when required.	

Recorded suggestions for improvement from to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Suggestions for improvement	Council Department/External Partner	Response	Status
30 July 2024 - Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report (2023/24)	Recommend that an Internal Communications Strategy is drawn up for data sharing between partners.	Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services	This has been accepted by the Independent Chairs and the Brent Strategic Partnerships Team. All relevant stakeholders will work together to ensure a strategy and processes are developed to ensure data sharing is incorporated into the work of both partnerships and the Brent Strategic Partnerships Team. This will now become an on-going action throughout the year.	
30 July 2024 - Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Report (Oct 22–Mar 24)	In relation to the commitment to develop data collection outlined in the report, to recommend that the next report details what the current system for data collection and analysis is and what the improvement over the period was.	Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services Independent Chair and Scrutineer, Brent Safeguarding Children Forum	This has been agreed and will be included in the next report that will come to the Committee in the 2025/26 municipal year.	

Page 98

Information requests from CWBSC to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Information requests	Council Department/External Partner	Response